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The streak

David Potter, Edward Barron

THE WATER SWIRLED ABOUT HER. SHE CLOSED HER EYES.

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THE STREAK



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Page 328.

THE STREAK

BY
DAVID POTTER

AUTHOR OF "AN ACCIDENTAL HONEYMOON," "I FASTEN A BRACELET,"
"THE LADY OF THE SPUR," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
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To

JOHN SLAUGHTER CARPENTER

with warm regard
David V. Oller

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. DON QUIXOTE.....	9
II. SUNDIALS.....	18
III. A VISION OF THE PAST, AND ONE OF THE FUTURE..	25
IV. THE TOMBOY SCOUT.....	33
V. A HANDCLASP.....	43
VI. AN ECCENTRIC MAN.....	53
VII. A MATTER OF NATIONS.....	61
VIII. A GREEN GOWN.....	66
IX. INTIMATE DISCUSSIONS.....	74
X. THE RIGADOON.....	86
XI. IN THE DARK.....	92
XII. UNDER THE GREEN LAMP.....	99
XIII. POLO, AND A VERSE.....	108
XIV. USURY.....	118
XV. A PASSING CARRIAGE.....	128
XVI. GARRYOWEN.....	136
XVII. THE BLACK HAG	143
XVIII. REVELATION.....	152
XIX. UNCERTAIN MUSIC.....	161
XX. A CRY FOR THE MOON.....	174
XXI. AN AMERICAN CITIZEN.....	180
XXII. MOON-MADNESS.....	190
XXIII. THE STREAK.....	194
XXIV. CRUCIFIXION.....	203
XXV. CONSOLATION.....	209
XXVI. BURIAL.....	215
XXVII. DREAMS IN THE WILDERNESS.....	221
XXVIII. DEER'S EYES.....	227

XXIX. A FLAME TO TINDER.....	234
XXX. FATIMA.....	239
XXXI. THE AMBUSCADE.....	246
XXXII. MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS.....	252
XXXIII. A FREE-HAND MAP.....	259
XXXIV. A BOON DENIED.....	271
XXXV. A CARABAO-HIDE WHIP.....	281
XXXVI. A SINGULAR SUICIDE.....	289
XXXVII. IN HOSPITAL.....	294
XXXVIII. DISCOVERIES.....	302
XXXIX. AFRAID.....	308
XL. ON THE BRINK OF THE PRECIPICE.....	317
XLI. THE FLOOD.....	326
XLII. INTO THE ABYSS.....	332
XLIII. THE MARCH FORWARD.....	343

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE WATER SWIRLED ABOUT HER. SHE CLOSED HER EYES.

Frontispiece

AS THEY LOOKED, THE CONSUL, RAISING HIS DISENGAGED HAND,
MADE A RAPID AND PECULIAR GESTURE..... 96

THE STREAK

I

DON QUIKOTE

“I HATE to think of leaving all this—Dick.”

“You’ll leave it with me, dear heart of mine.”

“Oh! I love your little Spanish tendernesses. Your mother gave you those, didn’t she? I wish I’d known her, Dick. And to think that I’ll soon be living in *your* home!”

“My home will be yours then, loved one.”

“Yes. And I know I shall love it—dearly—for your sake. But this place, and the old house at home, and—America! Everything is so *dear*. I’ve lived nearly twenty-two years, and yet I’ve never realized until just lately how much I love it all. Now that I’m going to leave it, it seems such a waste of time not to have felt I’ve loved it so all along.”

“You can run back whenever you like, adorable—as often as you care to leave—your husband.”

A shyness fell upon her at the word. They had been engaged only since Easter, and although they were to be married within a fortnight after the close of the college year, yet the thought still frightened her deliciously.

The June breeze, blowing from the Atlantic, brushed the pines of the Navesink Highlands, swept across green downs and greener dales, tossed the vines embowering a thousand farmsteads, and forty miles

away, bore the breath of salt water and pine balsam, of springing wheat and bee-haunted honeysuckle—mingled at the last with the faint, dry scent of ivy—into the open windows of a room in the old college tower.

The wind's tang brought an ache to the throat of the girl as she leaned against the window-seat, her back toward the chattering throng about the tea-tables. By anticipation, she felt the homesickness which should stir her ten thousand miles away.

The young man beside her, from time to time gave her a smile, quick and kind and a little dreamy. He was tall and slender, and his motions had grace and even distinction. His face was oval and rather thin, his hair very black, his skin a clear, dark-olive. There was a shadow of mystery in his eyes which, large and black, watched one quietly.

“When a girl has eyes as gray as Philippine pearls,” he said, “and hair as yellow as American goldenrod—when her cheeks are more like rose-coloured satin than anything else—why! she needn’t be afraid of—her husband.”

“Never of you!” Hidden by the curtain of the window-recess, Anne slipped her hand an instant into his. “You’re so kind to me, Dick. Those beautiful pearls you gave me last night, they’re from—where is it?—the Sulu Sea?”

“Yes. You must have been studying geography.”

She gave him a shy glance. “And history, too, since—Easter.”

“You dearest! Six months from now perhaps we’ll be sailing the Sulu Sea together.”

“It seems too wonderful to be true. A stay-at-

home Carolinian like me actually to live in your Islands! And to go there by way of Paris, too! Are the people so very queer—in the Islands?"

"There are thousands of Americans there now, and hundreds of Europeans."

"I mean the savages."

"You aren't likely to see many savages. Most of the Filipinos you'll meet are like other people anywhere—nearly. You won't feel lonely for lack of civilized society, that's certain."

"No, no. Not with you." A clamour of merry voices behind them made her tilt her head. "Besides, Helen March, there, is going out to visit her friend, Mrs. Easton—the one in the Army, you know. So you see, sir, if business ever keeps you away from me too long—"

A laughing voice cried out at her shoulder. "And Bob Duncan may be on hand to cheer you up, too, if old Don Quixote isn't equal to it!"

A short and sturdy young fellow, fresh-faced, brown-haired, and clear-skinned, grinned at them between the parted curtains, keeping his eyes tightly shut the while.

"Ah—hum-m! I couldn't help overhearing your last remark, Miss Churchill. But that's all I've heard—and I haven't *seen* a thing. Honest and true!"

"Young blatherskite!" smiled Dick.

"Old fox! Have you both had time enough to—ah—recover from your embarrassment? Are your blushes gone? May I open my eyes?"

Without waiting for permission he disclosed laughing eyes as brown as his hair.

Anne smiled at him affectionately. She had only recently come to know this classmate of Dick's—through her friend, Helen March, who was a very distant cousin of young Duncan's—but already she recognized in him certain qualities that interested and even touched her.

He was of a sort fortunately growing more common in America—a young man able and willing to serve his countrymen; enthusiastic, disinterested, clean in body and mind, possessing an unquenchable loyalty to the Republic and an unfaltering belief in the right purposes of the average man. He was of the sort which gives promise of embodying the best qualities of the American gentleman of the eighteenth century and of the English gentleman of the nineteenth; possessing withal a quality the latter seldom had—a genuine sympathy with men outside of his own social class, a sympathy which is only a form of the divine power of imagination.

He looked at Anne with the half-humorous expression of the boxer, or of the football player—that look a little pathetic which says: “You may strike me, but you cannot force me to stop smiling!”

“What's that you were saying about cheering us up?” asked Dick curiously.

“I referred only to Miss Churchill, my boy. You won't need any sympathy, lucky fox!”

He moved forward into the little alcove, letting the curtains drift together behind him. Still smiling, he thumped himself on the chest with a brown fist, but when he spoke his tone was serious.

“I'm thinking of going to the Philippines myself.” Anne's face lighted. “Not really?”

"I'm thinking of it pretty seriously. The idea suits me the more I look at it. You see, I've been talking to Helen. This morning, while Don Quixote and I were busy getting our little parchments handed out to us, Helen ran across a sort of cousin of hers—no relation of mine, but of hers. This chap's in the Army—Chillingsworth, or Crittenden, or some such name. He's no end of a 'savvy' man, and is down here to get some sort of honorary degree——"

"Master of Arts," suggested Dick.

"More likely Magister Militum," grinned Bob, who, strangely enough, had not forgotten all of his Freshman-year Latin. "Well, Helen happened to say something to him about me, and he told her I ought to try for a commission in the Philippines Constabulary. He says there are lots of college men from the West and the South in the Constabulary, but a good deal too few from the East. I've half made up my mind to have a go at it."

The older collegian—he was three or four years the other's senior—had been listening half indifferently, but now his smile faded a little.

"Oh, the Constabulary!" he said. "Are you in earnest, Bob?"

Duncan kindled to the bland incredulity in his friend's tone.

"Yes, I am. Why shouldn't I go into just that sort of thing? Perhaps I can put some of my gun-club training, and football, and polo, to good use after all. They certainly ought to help a little toward making a Constabulary officer! I'd like to do something worth while, even if only in a small way. Just be-

cause I'm not forced to work for a living isn't any excuse for loafing—for skulking—all my life."

"No fear of your doing that."

"Oh, you don't know how lazy I really am. Besides, I'll be hanged if I want to get fat and bald-headed by the time I'm thirty. Not if I can help it! Didn't the old Romans or Greeks believe that every man ought to serve the State for part of his life? Well, there are some real men running this world now, and perhaps some of them weren't so very much 'hotter stuff' than I when they began!" He faced squarely his still-incredulous class-mate. "Look here, old Don Quixote! You're going back to do your share in the Islands—why shouldn't I?"

"That's different. I was born there. I've lived there the greater part of my life. And I'm not going as a philanthropist or in Government—I'm going because my business interests—all the property my father left me—are there still."

"Yes, but many a man, the son of an American as you are, would shake the dust of a brown man's country off his feet, if he were in your place. But *you* don't! You're going to do your part, in your own way, in helping things along. Well, then—"

He brought himself up with a half shame-faced laugh, but looked from Dick to Anne, his eyes shining.

The girl pointed out the window, her hand trembling a little. "It's what all this is for, isn't it—to make men?"

Across the quadrangle, the sun, softening to the dusk of the day, touched with amber the gray of old walls, the green of old elms. The mellow light spoke of scholarly leisure and calm, but the stones it shone

upon were no less a symbol of the strength and hardihood by which ease must be won.

Lads destined to be great men had trodden those walks—presidents, generals, scientists, historians, novelists, poets, divines—and others destined only to work manfully and humbly toward the attainment of their ideals.

Duncan was the first to arouse himself. "Well, children, I'm really here only as a messenger. I was sent to tell you to come and play."

As he spoke the curtains were flung aside, and their position was stormed by a little crowd of slim, laughing girls, and vigorous, cheerfully-grinning young men. The amused face of Helen March's mother, who was acting as chaperone that afternoon, showed from the background of a comfortable arm-chair.

A babel of cries went up from the storming-party:
"Come! You two must stop 'twosing'!"

"No fair keeping Miss Churchill to yourself, Don Quixote. She'll have plenty of time to be bored by you in the next fifty years. Fair play, old scout, fair play!"

"What makes your cheeks so red?" they cried.
"The setting sun!" the maid replied."

This was chanted at them by a tall, black-eyed girl.

"Ah, happy, happy Youth!" This from an uncommonly fat and preternaturally solemn-looking young man.

"Stand back, Richard Nelson! This woman shall never be your bride!"

"I say, Don, does Miss Churchill know about that pair of violet eyes— Ahem! All right! I won't

say a word! Thought you might have confessed in time!"

The lovers were dragged gaily forth to the lemonade bowl.

"A toast! A toast, Bob!" cried Helen March, a small, arch girl, whose brown hair and eyes had a certain resemblance to Duncan's own. "We must be starting for the dedication in a moment, but give us a toast before we go."

Nothing loath, Bob mounted a chair, glass in hand. He bowed gallantly toward Mrs. March, beaming at him placidly from the wide chair, and toward Anne who, her gray eyes alight with fun, had found refuge at the older lady's side.

Bob's speech was harassed by the exclamations of his class-mates. "Honored chaperone, and—ah—*O puella pulchra!*"

("The only Latin he knows!")

"Unlovely class-mates!"

("*Et tu, Brute!*")

"We'll drink a glass of this rare Falernian——"

("O shades of Horace!")

"We'll drink, I say, to Don Quixote of Luzon, our Worshipful Knight of the Smiling Countenance."

("We're with you, friend Sancho Panza!")

"And above all——" he bowed again to Anne—"drink to the Loveliest Lady this side of Heaven!"

"Yea-a-a!" shouted the others as one man.
"Yea-a-a! The Loveliest Lady this side of Heaven!"

The uncommonly fat young man leaped agilely upon a chair beside Duncan's.

"Now then, fellows: '*Here's to Nelson, known as Don.*' Are you ready? All together!" With a great

flapping of his hands, he led the room in a swinging chorus:

“Here’s to Nelson, known as *Don*,
Old Don Quixote of Luzon—
His smile so foxy, kind, and sweet,
Keeps all the ladies at his feet!”

Anne joined in the applauding laughter, yet the careless song jarred upon her a little. Dick’s smile was sweet—not foxy certainly! that was boyish nonsense, of course. It was wondrously gentle, and kind, and sweet. But surely it was particularly so for her, and for her alone.

It jarred upon her to think that his class-mates fancied it characteristic.

II

SUNDIALS

THE group of young people clattered down the stairs, passed out of the quadrangle, and moved across the campus toward the spot whither other merry groups were converging.

All about, fresh voices called and laughter bubbled. Slim girls waved handkerchiefs in arch greeting, and broad-shouldered lads lifted caps in profoundly respectful acknowledgment. Youth was abroad in the land.

On the grass beneath the elms young men lay in flanneled triangles, each one's head pillow'd on the knee of another. It seemed that only by a miracle could they ever be disentangled.

Beneath windows shouts were heard:

“Oh-h, Reddy! Come on down to the sundial!”

“Hel-lo-o-o! Skinny Warrington! You busy? Want to take a walk?”

“Aleck Schuyler there! Ho, Sandy! Got a tie to lend me for to-night?”

“Micky M'Graw, M'Graw, M'Graw! Micky, stick your head out quick!”

(From above) “We-ell?”

(From below) “Stick it in again!”

Homeric laughter at this sophomoric jest arose “like the crackling of thorns under a pot”—so the indignant M'Graw flung down the retort.

Beyond wide stretches of green lawn, members of the Faculty, Fellows, distinguished alumni, and the

famous President of the University himself, could be seen. The hoods of their gowns—orange or purple or crimson—collected each its pool of shimmering light from the failing sun.

About a blackened cannon whose muzzle was sunk deep in the ground, four men shuffled in a solemn circle, their hands linked as if to defy the separation of the morrow. Passers-by watched them furtively. No one laughed at them.

A gray-haired professor hurrying past, doffed his hat in acknowledgment of a hearty cheer from a knot of upper-classmen who sat smoking at ease on a bench.

At a distance beyond, a hush fell upon the gay group. Carpet covered the steps of a dormitory entrance that the sound of feet might be deadened, and a tall senior stood in the doorway to ask quiet of anyone who might enter heedlessly there. But his caution was seldom needed, for all knew that above lay the alumnus who, after a ten years' dauntless fight against disease, had come back, still laughing, to his beloved college—to die content in his one-time room.

As they passed, Anne leaned a little against Dick.
“Oh! the poor fellow!”

“Yes. A pity!”

“He wasn’t—isn’t—married?”

“No, no.”

“Do you feel that way about this old place, Dick? As if when you come to die you must die here?”

They were well past the dormitory now, and he allowed himself a smile. “I don’t think about dying at all—if I can help it. We’ve just begun to live—you and I, dearest heart.”

“Oh, Dick! Suppose one of us should die—just

one of us without the other! What would the one that was left *do!*!"

"You mustn't think of such sad things."

She shivered. "It would be horrible—if anything should separate us."

"Nothing can—nothing but death."

"I know. But it's dreadful to think that sometimes other people—people who've been married—separate, for other reasons."

"Not people who've really been married—married soul and all."

"No, no. That's it, of course! You always see things so clearly." For a moment she was silent, then a smile lit her eyes at a half-heard sally from one of the saunterers who moved in front of them. "The others there—Helen March and the rest—they seem like children to me now." She looked up happily into his face. "And yet only a few weeks ago, before I really knew you, Dick, I was as young as they are. Isn't it all wonderful?"

"Yes. Wonderful!"

His glance, going swiftly over her, might have been interpreted to mean that he applied the adjective as much to her beauty as to the spirit of their love. Dick Nelson had come late to college—his twenty-six years had given him standards of taste, and opportunity to verify them. For the time, Anne's loveliness wholly satisfied him.

She was not too tall, and her figure, although slender, did not lack warmth of outline. Her gray eyes looked frankly and half-laughingly out from under eyebrows brown and very soft. Her cheeks were delicately bright, a colour that Dick was fond of com-

paring—in his “high Castilian phrase,” as Anne called it—to carnations, to rose-satin, to veiled sunset lights, just as buttercups and fairy gold were his lover’s names for her hair.

Perhaps her face held more than was revealed to Dick’s vision, competent as he thought it. The little gracious smile that hovered about the corners of her mouth showed more than the sweetness of her nature. Potential self-control and even resolution lay behind it. The cut of the nostrils, the poise of the head, the clearness of the gray eyes were heralds not only of health and beauty, but of dignity and courage. A gracious girl, yet a proud one—one proud to endure rather than to resent.

Feeling his eyes upon her, she glanced up to blush vividly under his ardent gaze. She walked on by his side in silence until her face felt cooler. As they passed under the arch of the great library and on toward the sundial, a subtle process of thought stirred in her mind.

“I wish father and mother had been able to come up, Dick.”

“Yes. What a pity your mother should catch that heavy cold just at this time. But, dearest, she’ll be well soon, surely—in plenty of time for the wedding.”

He smiled at her, but she was still absorbed. “Somehow they’ve never seen much of you, have they? Something or other has always happened to prevent. I wish they knew you better—how *dear* you are. Of course, they do know now through me, in a way, but I’d like them to know you thoroughly for themselves. You know a mother is always uneasy about—her

daughter's happiness. It's always so, I suppose." She broke off to give him a confiding glance.

He nodded down at her, his eyes thoughtful. She went on wistfully. "You were only a little fellow that time your father brought you to visit at 'Navarre'—at your uncle's. And since you've been at college, you've run down to South Carolina only twice."

"Once to re-discover *you*, and once to—*seize* you," he smiled.

"Goodness! It seems almost scandalous that we're about to be married! But *I* know you, Dick—and as for the others—do you remember what father said when you asked him—for me? 'You're a Nelson, my boy—that's enough!'"

Again he nodded thoughtfully. "He was very kind."

Joined by scores of others, their little party had now become a crowd gathered on a great square of grass about the slender shaft of the sundial. In an inner circle were the Faculty and the Fellows of the University, the brilliant hues of their hoods now flanked by the sheen of frocks and the gleam of white flannels.

Limiting the grassy quadrangle, Gothic walls threw back from many-ribbed windows a diamond light toward the setting sun. Beyond the walls sounded a continual murmuring, peaceful, lulling, where the evening breeze swayed an avenue of elms.

As if prevailed upon by the charm of this vesper-hymn, the laughing and chattering of the throng diminished, faltered, survived only here and there, fell away to silence. Quiet faces—faces lovely and soft, or handsome and manly—looked up to the orator who stood patiently on the step of the quaint sundial.

The charm of that old college held them all in thrall. Helen March and Bob Duncan smiled wonderfully at each other. The tall, black-eyed girl swayed involuntarily toward the preternaturally solemn-looking young man. A dreamy expression made Mrs. March's placid face almost beautiful. Dick's hand and arm stole about Anne's.

The orator of the day—a famous ambassador of a great foreign power—catching Anne's shining eyes turned up to his, smiled gravely and winningly down at her, and began to speak.

He spoke of the glory of the college, and the greatness of the men who as youths had drawn inspiration from it—of the wonder of youth, and the happiness that goes with youth—of the character that must be so moulded out of the hot inspiration and high ideals of young manhood as to last through the shocks and sufferings of a whole lifetime.

Finally he spoke of the sundial at his back—of its slender shaft which must endure daylight and darkness alike, balmy springs, pleasant summers, mellow autumns, or the chilling winds, biting frosts, driving rains, freezing snows of winter.

“These it is certain to experience, but always it must do its duty—must record unfalteringly the shadow of the Great Creator's hand—”

“—Shadows of sorrow but mark the hours on the sunny dial of life— It is the rending power of frost, not the harmless warmth of a kindly sun, which tests the real temper of the stone.”

The evening dusk had fairly come. The form of the speaker was dim. The sundial's shaft was but a slender finger pointing straight up toward a patch of

still-bright sky infinitely far above. The kind, mellow voice went on.

“—And when at last the Great Night shall fall upon the dial of a strong man’s soul, shall it not be that he may rest a while before the Glory of the Hereafter shall shine upon him forever?”

He ceased. But for a moment or two all stood hushed. A great soul had in some measure put into words the hope and longing of other souls. Then a soft rustling arose all about as the throng quietly dispersed.

Helen and Duncan emerged from the shadows. The latter took Anne and Dick by the arm.

“Let’s see just what that motto on the dial says. The speaker kept referring to it, but I didn’t get the actual words, did you?” Then as all three stooped and read the four lines carved in the stone: “By Jove! Isn’t that good! Eh, Don?”

“I don’t know,” returned Dick.

“Didn’t you get it?” Stooping again, Duncan read aloud.

“‘Loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game;
True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shined upon.’”

He straightened up slowly.

“Oh—of course,” said Dick.

Anne, who had turned to him with eager eyes, felt a vague disappointment.

III

A VISION OF THE PAST, AND ONE OF THE FUTURE

THE sunlight of Paris—so Dick had declared—would agreeably prepare Anne for the more persistent, although hardly more sparkling glow of Manila.

The boulevards, gay with pleasure-seeking men and women—the chestnut glades of the Bois—the thronged race-course at Longchamps—the still orchard-close at the Invalides—the Seine bearing its lazy boats past green islands to Saint Cloud—each in its kind and degree gave a share of perfect environment for a honeymoon.

It was all new to Anne, and although by no means so to Dick, yet it never lost its zest for him.

Perhaps she liked best to sit at one of the little iron-legged tables on the *terrasse* of a café, and there watch the strange river of life flow past: soldiers in baggy red trousers; “Immortals,” black-bearded, silk-hatted, decorated; Latin Quarter dandies, their hair parted down the backs of their heads, and brushed forward; *les Apaches*, furtive-eyed, defiant-mouthed; and above all, the women, women, always women, young or old, classed or unclassed, sylph-like or shapeless, gowned after the latest models or clad in what seemed gunny-sacks tied with a string.

One afternoon, at the hour of the *apéritif*, the two sank a little wearily into their accustomed seats.

“By Jove! It’s a real comfort to sit down,” said Dick. “Your fad of walking about Paris is a bit hard on an old automobilist like me. You see how

being married has begun to reform my bad habits already."

Anne smiled at him. "Shall we have tea?"

"Yes, of course." He was conscious that fatigue had brought a note of sharpness into his voice. "And a thimbleful of cognac for me," he added smilingly, "before I bite off somebody's head."

They were soon served, and Dick brightened visibly under his swallow of brandy. His eyes followed one after another of the sauntering figures.

"Well! This is something like! No place like Paris, after all."

"Not even Manila?"

"Manila's right enough—but not even Manila."

"Not even South Carolina, then?"

"Decidedly *not* South Carolina!"

"Not even my corner of it?"

He acknowledged her playful reproach with his quick smile. "Ah, of course—that. Of course, your corner of South Carolina, on a certain day not so very long ago, was the nearest to Paradise of any place in the world."

"Very nicely said, sir. Now, I'll admit there is no place like Paris. It's charming. Dick?"

"Anne?"

"How often have you been in Paris—separate visits, I mean?"

"I haven't the least idea. I suppose I've spent three or four years here altogether."

"Really? It makes me almost—jealous, to think how well you must have known Paris long before you knew—me. You must even know lots of people here I've never heard of."

His quick glance swept her face. But her eyes met his innocently.

"I said just now that being married had reformed my bad habits," he smiled.

"As if you'd ever had any bad habits, foolish boy!"

He eyed her again, and a hint of seriousness crept into his tone. "You mustn't think too well of me, you know. That'll never do—it isn't safe. The revulsion may be too great—when you find out I'm only made of clay."

"I'm not afraid," she returned confidently. "I know already you're only clay. So am I. So is everyone!"

"You say so now, but—"

He did not continue, and she looked up from the teacups to give him a reassuring smile. She was a little surprised to find him staring after two women who were passing, laughing and talking carelessly.

"That coat is a lovely crimson, isn't it? Oh! do you know them?"

He leaned back in his chair indifferently. "Eh! No. I thought for a minute—Ah! there is someone I do know, though! It's John Perry, Commander Perry, our naval attaché here. He called on us the other day, you remember, when we were out. That's the one—walking with the little Japanese-looking chap, there. Ah—he sees us now. Hello, Perry!"

In another moment introductions had been made, and the attaché and his companion were seated with the others on the *terrasse*.

Anne had seen the naval officer's like about Washington—deep-chested, of medium height, his hair

heavily streaked with gray, his smooth-shaven face bronzed by twenty years of sea-service, the tones of his voice reminiscent of the harshness of storms.

His Japanese friend Baron Kudo was even more true to type—almost laughably so, at any rate, to the type of Japanese diplomat Anne had seen represented on the American stage.

His legs were very short, and his immaculate frock-coat seemed disproportionately long. Upon his round skull, stiff black hair stood up aggressively. His eyes shone birdlike between prominent cheekbones and behind thick, gold-rimmed spectacles. His thin moustache drooped on each side of a persistently-smiling mouth. He sat very erect, his hands supported by the crook of a thick cane. Whenever he spoke to Anne he bowed from the waist. His English, and indeed his French, had a grammar-book formality.

“Nelson, if you want to know how your old home is getting on,” said the attaché, “Baron Kudo, here, can tell you all about it. He has just been doing the Philippines. Planning a raid on us down there, I dare say.” He laid a facetious finger on the arm of the Japanese.

The latter gave him a tolerant smile, but his bird-like eyes turned on Dick with a new interest. “You live in the Philippine Islands, Mr. Nelson? But you are not American?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Pardon me. I thought for a moment that you had—that you were——”

“My husband’s mother was Spanish,” explained Anne.

“Ah, of course—of course. Yes, I have seen a

little of your Philippine Islands, only a very little. It would have been a pleasure to me to see much more of them, very much more. They are beautiful—almost as beautiful as Nippon. Do you not think so, madame?"

"I've never seen either Japan or the Islands," confessed Anne.

"But of course your own America is beautiful, also. I have traveled in America. I admire very much your wonderful nation and your superb country."

Notwithstanding her half-amused interest in the Japanese, Anne found it difficult to keep up a conversation which became one of commonplaces exclusively. She allowed the naval attaché to engage her in the fascinating game of tracing out mutual acquaintances. Dick, too, soon permitted the talk between himself and Baron Kudo to languish, and resumed his scrutiny of the feminine members of the afternoon's parade. The Japanese continued to sit very erect, smiling politely and vacantly above his cane.

Anne and Commander Perry laughed and talked together. Now and then, by a word or a wave of his hand, he invited her attention to one or another of the passing throng whose personal appearance struck a bizarre note.

Their gaiety, quiet but genuine, silenced the more artificial chatter of a woman who passed, not for the first time, arm-in-arm with another. Both were strikingly pretty in the Parisian style.

One more experienced than Anne detected recognition in the eyes of the nearer of the two women. She had halted—a little abruptly—on the edge of the *terrasse*, and was staring at Dick. While Anne bent

oblivious over the teapot, brewing a fresh cup for Commander Perry, the woman in the crimson coat caught Dick's eye, and took a quick step toward him. Something in the young man's face—something imploring rather than threatening—held her aloof. Her glance went sharply from him to Anne. Then, with a half-wondering, half-scornful shrug, she sauntered slowly on.

As she moved away, walking with that defiant grace peculiar to a Parisienne, Kudo ceased to smile vacantly into space, and sat a little more erect. His birdlike glance flickered over Dick.

"You will continue to live in the Philippines?" he asked.

Dick roused himself from staring after the crimson coat. "Oh, yes. My business interests are there."

"And they are heavy, no doubt—very heavy—your interests there?"

The other was aware that among the Japanese personal inquiries are merely a conventional form of politeness. He nodded tolerantly.

"I suppose they might be called so."

"Of course—of course. It is evident when one sees you that you are a man of affairs," said Kudo frankly.

He pulled at the lapels of his coat with an abrupt motion as if seeking to drag thence words that would sustain a perfunctory conversation.

"By the way, the consul for Japan at Manila—what is his name? I have forgotten it. A good fellow, however. You must meet him."

"Perhaps I have already—I don't remember."

"I have his name at my hotel, I am certain. I shall write him to call upon you. I think you will like

him." He looked at Dick, a sudden fierceness behind the gold-rimmed spectacles. "Yes, I shall write him. He may be of service to you. If he does not pay you every attention, communicate with me through Tokio, I beg of you. You will do me a favour."

"Oh, I'm quite at home in Manila," returned Dick a little amused.

"He shall put himself entirely at your service."

Silence fell between them, and presently the naval officer turned toward them.

"I've been suggesting a motor-ride, Nelson—to Poissy. I want Mrs. Nelson to taste one of Albert's capons. We can go out, have dinner, and be back again by moonlight. What do you say?"

Dick sprang to his feet. "Just the thing," he declared heartily. "I'm tired of seeing people go by. Let's go by them a while. You'll like Poissy, Anne. We'll dine right by the river, you know. Moonlight on the stream, and all that."

"It'll be lovely." She turned to Baron Kudo. "I hope you'll come with us."

He bowed profoundly. "You are very kind. I thank you—very much. But I cannot go. I am sorry. I have letters to be written at once."

When they had gone, the Japanese beckoned a waiter and ordered writing materials. The *garçon* brought him the violet hued water, the sputtering pen, and the impossible note-paper that make up the *de quoi écrire* of a Paris restaurant.

Kudo busied himself for a long time over two letters—so long, indeed, that the waiter to whom the letters were finally handed to post, was impelled to read the addresses on the envelopes before he slipped them into

the box. He smiled rather contemptuously as he read.

The Japanese had written his letters with such evident care that the experienced *garçon* had assumed that at least one of them would have a feminine destination. He felt it a reflection not only upon the other's good sense but upon his own powers of observation to find that one letter was directed: "H. Gorsjiu, Consul for Japan, Manila, Philippine Islands," and the other bore the address of a famous Japanese statesman, resident at Tokio.

IV

THE TOMBOY-SCOUT

TOMBOY-SCOUT headed the Boy Scout Patrol, four strong, as it marched in solemn if somewhat uncertain array, through the stone-pillared gateway, and came to a halt in the garden of "Navarre."

The Scoutmaster, notwithstanding the khaki bloomers, the close-cut hair, and the formidable staff, was clearly a girl. The silky fairness of her hair, the pallour of her skin, the blue of her long-lashed eyes, and the delicate contours of her face, proved her to be an American girl.

Although the scout who followed her adoringly was a very small scout indeed, and wore nothing more distinctive of sex than a very scanty shirt, yet even a newcomer to the Philippines would have known at once that this scout was a boy.

The newcomer might have found it difficult, however, to determine what sort of boy this was. His hair was very black and very straight and stiff, but his eyes were of a clear gray and met one's bravely. His skin was neither white nor brown, but of a hue between the two. His arms were thin, and round with an Oriental roundness, but his finger-nails, as far as one could see through their grime, were an unblemished pink.

The third member of the patrol was undeniably a tiny pink pig with black ears, and the fourth was a tinier puppy, deep brown from his imploring nose to the tip of his hilarious tail.

Under the eye of the Tagalog lodge-keeper, whom she justly suspected of not regarding matters with proper gravity, the Tomboy Scout abandoned her intention of putting her forces through a preliminary drill, and instead, began to explain to them the purpose of their visit.

"Now, we've come to call on a lady 'at lives here—a lady 'at's just come to live here, you know."

The boy, his legs well apart, listened absorbed. The puppy sat down suddenly on his haunches as if quite overwhelmed by what he heard. But the pink pig, deserting his place in the ranks, began to root disdainfully about a near-by fern.

The Scoutmaster, after giving the rooter a reproachful poke with her official staff, directed her words exclusively to the more attentive part of her audience.

"Yes, Buddo-Scout, my mother and my Aunt Helen they met her two days before yesterday, when the big boat came in, and she's just be-yew-tiful. And so—and so *we* must come and see her the way ev'rybody else has already."

Buddo opened his mouth to express a practical purpose.

"Candy?"

"O—oh! 'Course, Buddo-Scout, she'll give us some candy. Anyhow, I hope she will. But you mustn't *ast* for it, *will* you, Buddo-Scout?"

"Pig-Scout likes candy," averred Buddo with winning significance.

"We *all* like it, but we must be polite. We must wait—Oh! ever so long—before we *ast* her for any.

Mebbe 'most half an hour. We just *must* be polite, Buddo-Scout, 'cause she's an American—like me."

"Buddo American!" said the child eagerly.

Tomboy eyed him dubiously. Only the day before she had heard her father and mother discussing this very matter.

"It won't hurt Tomboy to play with the poor little duffer," her father had declared. "Major Crittenden has had one of his men go into the case. It's one of the usual sort, of course—an American, and a Filipina girl who wasn't his wife. Then the man tired of the girl a year or so ago, and deserted her—and a Chinaman took her as his housekeeper. She and her child had to live, I suppose. Only she didn't live long, and now the Chino has Buddo, and treats him badly enough, too, I've no doubt. From what I could make out, Crittenden has his eye on the Chino for some police matter or other, but the law doesn't let him interfere with Buddo. You know that peonage business has never been straightened up here."

Tomboy had understood something of her parents' talk. So now she eyed the boy dubiously.

"Buddo American! American like the Pretty Lady," said the child with anxious persistence.

Tomboy spoke nobly. "Yes. She's an American just like *you*, Buddo-Scout."

Pig-Scout was dragged from the fern-roots, Puppy-Scout was set on his wobbly legs, and the patrol took up its march. A moment later, Anne Nelson, coming down the broad staircase of the house, stood smilingly amazed at the scene before her.

Tomboy's face was held rigid. "Right into line! Halt! Right dress! Front!" she ordered.

She herself faced toward Anne, and pulled Buddo into place beside her. By some miracle of curiosity or sheer idleness, Pig-Scout and Puppy-Scout, trotting forward, moved into line with all the appearance of intention. The manœuvre had been eminently successful —Tomboy swelled with pride.

“Salute!” she roared as gently as any sucking dove.

Puppy-Scout merely cocked an ear, while Pig-Scout shamelessly rolled on the stone flags of the *entrada*, brandishing his cloven feet in an ecstasy of scratching. But Tomboy’s precise hand and Buddo’s somewhat less certain one amply met the requirements of the command.

To the children’s huge delight, Anne gravely returned the salute.

“Thank you—ah—soldiers——”

“We’re the Lizard Troop of the Boy Scouts!”

“That’s what I meant, of course—the light behind you dazzled me a little. Welcome, Lizard Scouts, and thank you for this honour.”

The Scoutmaster having thus far stoutly maintained the martial mood, now found it necessary to relax.

“I’m Mrs. Easton’s little girl, Mrs. Nelson, and Captain Easton’s, too. I’m Cath’rin, but ev’rybody calls me just ‘Tomboy-Scout.’”

“Oh, you’re Tomboy!” Anne stooped to press the child’s cheeks between her gentle palms. “Of course. You know I’ve seen your dear mother and your father two or three times already.”

“And my Aunt Helen, too? She’s not truly my aunt, you know, but——”

"Yes, and your Aunt Helen, too. They've all been awfully kind to me. You'll be, too, won't you?"

"Yes," declared Tomboy eagerly. "We'll be friends—the way you and my Aunt Helen are. And ev'rybody says you're just be-yew-tiful, Mrs. Nelson, so we thought we'd come and see—Buddo-Scout and me."

Buddo grinned. "Pretty Lady," he affirmed tranquilly.

Anne patted his head. "Come up to the sala, and let's see if we can't find some goodies. I'm almost sure there's a box of chocolates somewhere about."

Buddo scorned to dissemble his relief and delight. "A—ah! Candy!" he breathed triumphant.

"Can Puppy-Scout and Pig-Scout come, too?" asked Tomboy. "They're a reg'lar part of the patrol, you know."

"Of course. All of you! Forward—March!"

The Nelsons had reached Manila a few days before, to find a hearty greeting awaiting them on the very pier. When a throng of smiling welcomers, American, Spanish, British, surrounded them while their baggage was being overhauled by the Customs inspectors, Dick's face shone. Anne noticed his satisfaction with amused surprise.

"Didn't you expect anyone down to meet us, Dick?" she asked as the carriage bore them away from the pier.

He gave her his quick smile. "Oh, I didn't know. You see, I never brought home a wife before, strange as it may seem."

"But why should you be surprised that people should want to see what I was like when you did bring

me home? Don't you think I'm worth seeing, sir! Besides I can't really claim all that welcome even if the Eastons and Helen were there. You had a right to expect some of your own old friends to be down, didn't you? And they were—in crowds."

"Yes. But I—I didn't know before how well they'd take it—take you."

"They?"

"The people here."

"Oh, ho! You mean you left some broken hearts in Manila when you last sailed away! Shame, sir, shame!"

Dick smiled again, and signaled the cochero. "Drive home by way of the Escolta, Francisco."

As their steamer had stood up the bay early that morning, the great, straggling city, dim under its cloud of smoke and haze and overshadowed by the mountains looming behind it, had presented only the most indistinct of forms to Anne's eye and the vaguest of images to her mind.

But now, as the carriage rolled past the ancient walls of Intramuros, and out upon the Bridge of Spain, she began to receive a definite impression of Manila—its quaintness, its variety, its old-world charm, its new-world flavour.

The Pasig River hurried below them, its dust-gray surface ridden by a hundred cascoes, their prows gay in pink squares and blue circles and red half-moons. In and out between them, skimmed canoes piled so high with grass that only the shockheads of the paddlers showed above, like the hair of men buried alive. Inter-island freighters lay alongside the river-wall, discharging honey-coloured hemp and brown sugar and red-

hulled rice, black tobacco and chestnut-hued copra, and pearl-shell glowing in many colours—to the clank of ships' cranes and the wild chanting of native laborers.

From the Bridge of Spain the way debouched into the Escolta. Here sleepy carabaos, with horns a fathom wide, blocked the way of smart automobiles. Dilapidated two-wheeled carts drawn by direct descendants of Rosinante, drove mad the gongs of trolley-cars. American Army officers, cap-a-pie on their big chargers, wheeled to avoid half-naked Filipino boys who drummed bare heels on the ribs of diminutive ponies. The narrow street—roadway, gutter, and sidewalk—was choked from shopfront to shopfront, until it looked as if not one more living thing could be forced into it.

In the shops could be seen American matrons, cool and smart in white linen, Spanish girls graceful in black lawns, English women, feather-hatted and ear-ringed, Filipinas, their loose bodices and wide skirts charmingly awkward.

Everywhere were bustle and uproar, but everywhere were good nature and freedom from real confusion.

“Isn’t it fascinating!” exclaimed Anne.

“You’ll find anything you want here—from pearls to pirates.”

“Look! There’s someone waving his stick at you, Dick. The strange-looking man with the white hair and long nose. Don’t you see? Across the street there!”

Dick stared about. “Yes, now I do.” He took off his hat in response to the other’s eagerly-lifted helmet and flourished cane. “I don’t know him, though. Oh yes—I believe it’s the Japanese consul here.

Gorsjiu—that's his name, I think." He gazed back at him, faintly curious. "Yes, Gorsjiu. He seemed particularly glad to see me, didn't he? Yet I never met him but once or twice. I wonder why all this cordiality from the amiable Gorsjiu? I suppose he's got something he wants to sell me. These chaps are allowed to go into trade, you know. I think it's a wrong principle." Again he turned a backward gaze. "Hum-m! That Japanese Legation man we met in Paris—Baron Kudo—said something about Gorsjiu."

They turned out of the Escolta, and passing block after block of residences, some charmingly old, some garishly new, came at last to their own house of "Navarre." Dick's father had named it after the old Nelson place in South Carolina, which had itself received the title in memory of the Huguenot ancestor who had fought by the side of Henry of Navarre.

Anne looked about her, her eyes shining with pleasure at all she saw: the great wall secluding the house from the street—the old garden before it—the river stealing behind it—the house itself, its roof of moss-grown red tiles, its lower storey of huge blocks of stone overlaid with pinkish plaster, its upper storey all of hard woods; a house of overhanging balconies, and windows vastly wide, and a brick-paved azotea extending like a roofless, second-storey veranda toward the river.

Below, about the patio, were the servants' quarters, whence such swarms of men, women, and children peered out at her as she ascended the staircase that she was irresistibly reminded—not without a pang—of the negroes who toiled for and battened on the family in her father's house in South Carolina.

In the cool shadows of the sala, the Filipino head-boy and his assistants, clad in immaculate white shirts hanging outside their trousers, stood bowing and smiling.

So Anne Nelson, the wife, came to her own place, the house of her husband—to the great adventure and the great hazard of married life! Tears were in her eyes as Dick kissed her, and with that quaint formality which to her mind charmingly showed his Spanish blood, welcomed her as the mistress of “Navarre.”

Anne had let the events of the past few days run through her mind while the Lizard Patrol of the Boy Scouts was regaling itself upon goodies. She was now recalled to the present by a sigh of satisfaction from Buddo.

“Are they good, chicken?” she smiled.

“Good!” declared the boy, smacking his lips stickily. A ray of sunlight at that moment penetrating the room, lit Anne’s fair hair and red lips. He gazed in a sort of awe. “O—oh! Pretty Lady!”

“He’s a little flatterer, isn’t he, Tomboy?”

“No, Mrs. Nelson. I think you’re pretty, too.” She considered her judicially. “Yes, I think you’re just be-yew-tiful.”

“Goodness me!”

“And so does Puppy-Scout—and Pig-Scout, too, ‘cause he rolled right on the ground when we saluted you.”

“O—oh! I thought that was for—other reasons.”

“No. I’m ‘most sure it was ‘cause he *loves* you. I think I’m ‘most sure. I think it wasn’t just to scratch hisself. He’s a very *good* pig.”

“I’m sure he is.”

Tomboy eyed her with approbation. "Major Crittenden'll love you awful much, too.

"Major Crittenden? Who is he, dear?"

"He's a ga-reat friend of mine. He loves me cause I've got gold-en hair. He says he loves girls with gold-en hair, so he'll just have to love you, I guess, 'most as much as me." She slipped down from her chair. "Well, good-by, Mrs. Nelson. We've had a lovely time, thank you."

The four redoubtable scouts of the Lizard Patrol tramped, toddled, tumbled, and rolled down the stairs, according to their respective natures and powers.

V

A HANDCLASP

LATE in the afternoon of the same day, Anne was sitting on the azotea. The overarching boughs of a mango-tree which grew in the patio below, cast cool shadows across the tiles, while the warmth of the sunlight filtering through was tempered by the breeze from the river.

A servant appeared bearing a card, and behind the card came Mrs. Easton with a little rush.

"I simply couldn't wait to see if you were at home, my dear. I guessed you might be dreaming here. Come, come! You mustn't let Philippinitis get you already. Or don't you realize it's Saturday and six o'clock?"

Anne shook hands cordially. Mrs. Easton's cheery personality had pleased her from their first meeting.

"And what's supposed to happen on Saturday—at six o'clock?"

"You don't mean to say your husband hasn't told you? A bridegroom, too! That's just it—I see how it is—he wants to keep you all to himself! I must get after him. He can't do that forever."

"He hasn't had time to tell me everything he knows—quite. I fancy he wouldn't have kept it concealed from me much longer—whatever it is."

"It's the Luneta, child, of course! The Luneta—the Constabulary Band—sunset on Mariveles Mountain—and *toute monde* driving 'round and 'round until the policeman holds us up when the band plays! Put

on your 'bonnet,' and come along—my victoria's outside."

While Anne stationed herself hat in hand before the mirror in the sala, Mrs. Easton ran on.

"There's room in the carriage for your husband, of course. I hope he'll come."

"He's down town. He said not to expect him to-night until after seven o'clock." She smiled over her shoulder. "Think of business keeping a bridegroom from—me!"

"Oh, it's more likely politics, although, of course, one's so mixed up with the other that nobody can tell them apart. All the men out here are wrapped up in politics, you know. And your husband is bound to be a leading politico, and so—" She checked herself abruptly.

"Politico? Is that a politician? Dick hates politics," Anne declared.

"Of course, of course. He wouldn't be a politician in *that* sense. But he *is* interested in the—the life of his—his acquaintances out here, isn't he? And he wants them—the Filipinos he happens to know—to do well? We all want that, you know."

The vagueness, not to say confusion, of her words, was almost wholly lost upon Anne. Nevertheless, she thrust her hatpins a little fretfully into place, half resentful that anyone but herself should presume to knowledge of her husband's tastes. For a moment, the bride's jealous desire to absorb all of her husband's thoughts and aims was strong in her. But by the time she had adjusted her hat to her liking she was able inwardly to laugh at herself.

"That's a pretty hat," said Mrs. Easton, studying

her admiringly. "It's a Bulacan bamboo, isn't it? The green band makes just the right contrast with the white of the low crown and the wide brim."

"It's a present from Dick."

"He has excellent taste—it's very becoming to you. Did he ever think to tell you that you have the loveliest brown eyebrows!"

"I'm all ready," smiled Anne.

"Then come along. The Luneta is such a good place to meet people informally."

They bowled along the smooth road at a round pace. High-walled gardens bordered the street, cut here and there by narrow lanes at whose shadowy ends the river gleamed in copper and bronze and silver. At the water's very brink white arcs were seen dimly to flutter like the wings of great birds where washerwomen beat out laundry upon the stone steps of boat-landings.

Farther down the street, the statelier residences—homes of Americans or Europeans or wealthy Filipinos—gave place to the less pretentious ones inhabited by middle-class natives. Here the upper storeys of the houses overhung the sidewalks, and in the floors below little tiendas tempted the native passers-by with gaily-coloured cloths, slippers even more rainbow-hued, odd-looking vegetables, and impossible sweet-meats.

Here and there at an upper window, a dusty newspaper twisted between the bars advertised a room to let; or a yellow palmleaf drooping from the windowsill warned the world that death had within a twelve-month claimed one of the family within.

The teeming city interested Anne profoundly, not

only for its own sake, but also on account of the husband to whom her life was united. It was here that he must have his career, among this people inscrutable, bewildering, as yet even a little alarming to her. She found comfort in remembering that all that seemed so overwhelming to her was to him the merest commonplace.

As they drove along Bagumbayan under the arches of the rain-trees, she had no forewarning of a meeting about to take place which was to influence her every thought and emotion, and eventually to alter the whole course of her life.

“Now, my dear, don’t be disappointed when you first see the Luneta,” said Mrs. Easton. “Just let it grow on you.”

Indeed, the caution was needed, for as they turned out of Bagumbayan, the stretch of open ground before them, treeless save for a few stunted palms, the Club buildings beyond, architecturally characterless if not downright displeasing, the small and commonplace bandstand, the gray roads winding about a lawn scantily adorned with flowers and shrubs—all seemed to the eager girl bare and almost forlorn.

Then, not by a gradual growth, but at a bound, the real charm of the scene gripped her. The massive concrete of the Clubs was devoid of garishness; the very unpretentiousness of the bandstand was surely of its just proportions. The great lawn was clothed in softest green—beyond, the blue-black bay rippled to the far base of the Mariveles Mountains, now slowly turning pink with the fading sun. The sails of native fishing-boats and the hulls of foreign steamers caught the light in hues of maroon and crimson and orange.

To the right, past the graceful bulk of the Hotel, the Malecon Drive skirted the Walled City. On that spot Magellan's little band of world-navigators had swaggered. There the mail-clad hidalgos of Legaspi, the conquistador, had marched—at their head the priest, Urdaneta, brandishing a cross. Yellow pirates from the Yang-tze-Kiang had swarmed, hordes slit-eyed, yammering, hideous. From Cornish's British fleet, pig-tailed and tobacco-chewing seamen had mounted, cutlass in hand, to the storming of the Castilian stronghold. Beneath one of its bastions the Filipino patriot, Rizal, had fallen before a platoon of Spanish rifles. And there an admiral and a general of the American Republic had received in the surrender of the proud city the surrender of the sovereignty of that Empire to which a Pope had once given half a world.

The red-brick sentry-boxes on its walls, and the red-tiled roofs of the barracks behind them, glowed redder at the touch of the westering sun, as if in memory of the bloodshed they had witnessed during four centuries.

Anne drew a happy breath.

“You like it?” asked Mrs. Easton.

“Oh, yes! It’s awesome to think of all that’s been lived through here!”

“Yes, but I’m all for living in the present. Persons interest *me*. Just look at this mob.”

The carriage had come to a halt in the midst of a hundred other vehicles drawn up near the bandstand, and Anne was able to obey the injunction.

On the sidewalk a throng of people strolled in an unending procession: Filipinos barbered to the nines,

grown men holding hands after a fashion which to the Westerner touchingly expresses some of the childlike qualities of the Malayan—Englishmen, walking with their arms swinging stiffly at their sides, their crook-handled canes moving like piston-rods, their trousers ending startlingly at their ankles—tall Sikhs, their beards braided, and twisted along their cheeks to be confined under brown turbans—dapper Japanese men tailored as if for Fifth Avenue, and their tiny women toddling gorgeous in kimono and obi.

Groups of Spaniards went by, men, women, and children, in family groups, chatting to each other with that gentle humour and those delicious cadences of speech found only in their nation.

There, too, sauntered German and Swiss merchants, white helmets shading florid faces, and white coats swelling outward from chest to waistline—smiling Chinese in shiny-black jackets and flapping trousers of wonderful blue—half-caste Portuguese from Goa and from Macao.

Friars and priests abounded—Spaniards, Belgians, Irish—brothers of the Capuchin Order in coarse brown gowns and shovel hats, bare-legged, with sandals on their feet—Augustinian and Dominican friars in fine white, men sleek and well-clad—Jesuit fathers in black girded with wide black belts—now and then, a follower of Saint Francis in shabby blue, his drawn hood giving him an air of mystery and intrigue.

Native women shuffled past in their little toe-slipper—volute Tagalogs, placid Ilocans, wondering Bicos, and Visayans, prettiest and gentlest of Filippines—all clad alike in airy kerchief and bodice of

jusi or *sinamay* or *piña*, and in gay flounced skirt, inconceivably voluminous.

But most notable of the motley throng were the Americans, all alert of eye, almost all stalwart, hardly any old—bronzed men of the Forestry Bureau just arrived from months-long exploring trips, and still clad in rough khaki and high-laced boots; their brothers, the miners and assayers from the Pacific slopes of Luzon; athletic-looking teachers from the public schools; business men, deep-chested, level-eyed; and everywhere soldiers of the Army, bluejackets of the Navy, and men of the Constabulary, in immaculate uniforms.

Anne turned misty eyes on her companion. "It—makes one feel—proud."

The kind-hearted Army wife understood. "It does make one a bit choky, doesn't it?—all these fine young fellows away off here, working for us—for us women? For, after all, every one of 'em has a girl he's really working for, you know. Call it patriotism, if you like—I call it a *girl*. But it's the same thing."

"I didn't dream there were so many fine-looking soldiers in all America."

"Of course you didn't. That's because you've lived in South Carolina or the Eastern States all your life. It never entered your head that there really was an Army, made up of people just like other people—only finer because they are particularly selected, you know. Of course you wouldn't have known anything about it unless you'd happened to be an Army girl." Her tone plainly expressed the belief that if not of the Army, a girl must be one of the miserables of the earth.

The Constabulary Band began to play, and Mrs. Easton was forced to forego coherent speech. But between measures she was able to keep up an intermittent fire of comment.

"That's the archbishop there—the cochero and footman in purplish trimmings. You can just see *his* hood under the carriage-top—

"And there's *our* bishop—in the automobile. I always wonder what he's forever reading so seriously—

"Wait a minute, then look right behind you—be careful! The left-hand one of the two men in the big car? His Excellency, the Governor-General of the Philippine Islands, my dear! Oh, you'll like him—the kindest man—

"Close to the sidewalk there—the victoria with the two cute white ponies—Donna Dolores Rumong—isn't she pretty? She and her husband—real Filipinos—the very best sort in the Islands—attractive, too, both of them."

"They must be the ones we're going to dine with to-morrow night," said Anne.

"Of course, they'd be sure to look you up promptly—

"Do you see the little woman—American—in black—the carriage next to the Governor-General's car? Saddest case—her husband—by the Moros—horribly—only three months ago—"

The band stopped with a crash. On the ceasing of the music, the beat of horses' hoofs began to sound along the driveways.

Darkness had come, and in the bandstand and about the promenades the glare of electric lights leaped

out. On the sidewalk near the two women, where an arc-lamp shone, faces emerged from shadow into light and vanished into shadow, themselves as strange and unreal as shadows.

Mrs. Easton now and then bowed vaguely in response to an uplifted cap.

"I'm sure it's too dark to recognize anyone," she said regretfully. "We must come earlier next time. Shall we drive up the Malecon and see the steamer-lights on the Pasig?" She broke off to peer at two men who had halted near-by. "Why! there's Alan Crittenden—Major Crittenden! The good-looking, tall officer with the little stocky one—I don't know *him*. But you must meet Alan Crittenden." She raised her voice. "Major Crittenden! A-lan! Don't you deign to recognize a friend? Come here, do! I want you to know a *real addition*."

Anne's eyes, passing over the taller of the two men who came toward them in response to this summons, rested upon "the little stocky one." She gave a cry of pleasure.

"But I know *him*. It's Bob Duncan. Oh! Bob, I'm so glad to see you!"

"By Jove! Anne Nelson! Isn't this great!" The boy seized her outstretched hand, and frankly clung to it. "How *are* you? I knew you had arrived, of course, and I'd have been in on you like hot marbles but I've been away from town—and besides I thought you'd want a chance to get settled. Anne, you're looking mighty fit. It's like seeing home to see you again."

"And to see you, Bob. Mrs. Easton—Mr. Duncan of—of the Constabulary, isn't it? One of Dick's

chums at college, you know. Bob, *you're* looking fit, if anyone is."

Indeed, the young fellow was good to look upon—his brown hair bared, the khaki helmet swinging in his hand, his short and powerful body clad in the Constabulary uniform of khaki touched with red, his legs guarded by puttee-leggings of polished russet leather, his white teeth gleaming as his face lit with pleasure.

"You like it, Bob—your new life?"

"Ra-ther! Of course, I haven't really done anything yet. I've been up at the Constabulary School in Baguio most of the time, trying to learn my job. I beat you to the Islands by a few months, you know. How's old Don Quixote? The luckiest man in the world, the sly old fox! Yes, I like everything here immensely. Oh! you haven't met my chief, have you?" He turned to his companion with a suddenly-assumed formality of manner, a manner respectful, admiring, even shyly affectionate. "Mrs. Nelson—Major Crittenden."

Almost mechanically, Anne yielded her hand to the older officer. Then, all at once, her absent-minded absorption in Duncan gave way to a vivid interest in the other—a man into whose hand her own was taken with a grip extraordinarily firm and gentle, and into whose eyes—eyes so profoundly blue as to seem almost black—she found herself looking with the intentness of one who tries, and tries in vain, to sound illimitable depths.

VI

AN ECCENTRIC MAN

ALAN CRITTENDEN was a man of a sort often found in our Government service; a sort whose existence is too little known to the average American.

He was a member of a family which had been American for eight generations, and through seven of the eight not only had possessed moderate wealth and the things such wealth makes possible, but also had had the leisure and the inclination for public service which too rarely go with the ability to live easily and the knowledge of how to live well.

Turning aside but a little way from the activities of his ancestors—diplomatic, juridical, senatorial—Crittenden had chosen the profession of arms. To his natural aptitude for a military life, he was able to bring an inherited ability in many lines of public affairs, affairs with which the duties of a soldier are often directly connected.

Open yet not hearty in manner, responsive yet not without reserve, self-possessed, observant, and secretive to an extraordinary degree without seeming to be in the least so, he was one of the important, although almost unnoticed, factors in the progress of the Great Republic.

His face might have been called genial had it not been for a certain firmness of lip and chin. In turn, their severe lines were softened by the eyes—blue eyes, keen yet friendly. A lean man, a trifle above six feet in height, the activity of his body was evident to any

observer, but no one who had not felt the force of it in anger would have guessed its iron strength. His age might have been thirty years.

Looking into his eyes as she shook hands, Anne realized that a forceful man was regarding her with frank admiration. She had a strange feeling that she had seen him at another time and place—a feeling she was certain must be without foundation and one, therefore, that vaguely disturbed her. She rallied her faculties to withdraw her hand from his.

“I’m not going to ask you how you like Manila—Mrs. Nelson.” He hesitated a little as if not quite sure of her name.

“Mrs. Dick Nelson, you know,” explained Mrs. Easton, rather glibly it seemed to Anne.

“Oh, yes. We must allow you time to get over your homesickness before we press you to tell us how you like us.”

“But Manila is my home now, and I love it already. Everyone’s so kind.”

“I intend to have myself counted in on that ‘everyone,’ ” he smiled, “if I’m found half-way worthy. May I call soon? I already know your husband—a little.”

“We’ll be very glad to see you. I’ve only been here a week, you know, so I haven’t decided on a ‘day’ yet—but any day.”

“Thank you very much. I’m glad you like Manila. You’ve come at a good time to see it at its best—in its ‘best bib and tucker’—at Malacafian next week.”

“The Governor-General’s Palace,” explained Mrs. Easton who had not let herself become so deeply involved in her lively conversation with Duncan as to prevent her keeping one ear open toward the others.

" You'll find a card to the reception somewhere about your house, I'm sure."

" Yes. Dick mentioned it the other day. I'm quite looking forward to going." Her glance roamed over the dim forms on the sidewalk, forms still emerging from darkness into light and vanishing again into darkness like ghosts of half the civilizations of the world. " I've been watching the crowd, Major Crittenden. Isn't it a picture! At any rate, it's wonderful to me, lately from America."

" It's still so to me—and I've been here and hereabouts a good many years now."

" Oh, have you? I wonder if you knew my husband's father and mother. She died several years before her husband did. They say she was lovely."

" You've heard of Mrs. Nelson, Alan—Mrs. Henry Nelson," said Mrs. Easton. " Mrs. Henry Nelson was Richard Nelson's mother, you know. So many of the old Spanish families have died out or moved back to Spain, haven't they—the Spanish?"

Anne noticed that Crittenden's lip tightened suddenly. She wondered if he were a trifle annoyed at Mrs. Easton's interruptions, or if his face were merely assuming a natural gravity.

" It was before my time she died, I think—before we Americans had taken the Islands. Her son has been very lucky—as Duncan was saying a moment ago."

" Didn't he say you were his chief?" asked Anne. " Then you must be in the Constabulary, too."

" *In* it!" cried Bob. " He *is* the Constabulary!"

The other smiled at his subordinate. " That reminds me of a saying they have in the Navy of how

things are done 'by the help of Heaven and a few marines.' "

He spoke half absently, and Anne realized that he was absorbed in contemplation of herself. She blushed ever so faintly—she had remembered Tomboy Easton's prattle of this same Major Crittenden.

"Do you ride, Mrs. Nelson?" he was asking.

"I used to, at home."

"Then perhaps you'll let me ride with you sometimes. I fancy I can guide you and your husband to some places that even he hasn't seen. We might make up a party. Catharine, you could get Easton to go, couldn't you? And I dare say Duncan would be glad to ask—hum-m!—someone else."

Duncan blushed at this piece of ostentatious discretion, and thereupon Mrs. Easton shook a delighted finger at him.

"Oh ho! *You're* the one, of course! Another of Helen March's victims, Mrs. Nelson. Well, well! so young and inexperienced, too! It's really too bad of Helen!"

"Oh, come!" protested the embarrassed young man. "Why! I've known Helen March for years. She's a sort of cousin of mine. Mrs. Nelson knows that."

"I didn't know the affair had gotten serious, though," teased Anne.

"I say, Anne! That was just Major Crittenden's little joke, you know, and——"

"Joke! Did I say anything jocular? I tried my best to say nothing."

"Well!—Mrs. Easton, you see what you've let me

into! Helen's a sort of cousin of Major Crittenden's, too. That's how I'm lucky enough to be out here."

"I won't let them persecute you any more, Mr. Duncan," declared Mrs. Easton, shamelessly ignoring the part she herself had taken in his baiting. "I'll stand by you."

While Mrs. Easton, by virtue of that half-motherly, half-good-comrade manner she had made her own, drew Duncan on to speak of himself—his past, and his hopes and plans for the future—Crittenden, on the other side of the victoria, engaged Anne in quiet talk. It was not until long afterward that the girl realized how much he must have succeeded in learning about her life during their short chat that day. At the time, she was only conscious that he listened with a flattering interest to whatever she said, and himself said very little.

"Mr. Nelson has lived in America for some years, hasn't he? Yet I thought I remembered meeting him here only last summer."

"No doubt you did. He's been at college in America, but he came back here almost every summer to look after things—business matters, you know. His father had always wanted him to go to his old college, but somehow Dick had never gotten round to it until his father died. Then he went. It was rather nice of him to carry out his father's wishes, wasn't it? You know my family and his—that is, his uncle's—are neighbors in South Carolina."

"Yet I think you said you never met Mrs. Nelson—his mother?"

"She never visited in America. Her health was never strong enough for the long trip, I believe. I

wish I could have known her. I suppose a woman always does long to know her husband's mother. She was about the last of her family, so it looks as if I'd never know the Spanish branch of my relatives, at all—my new relatives."

He looked up at her steadily. "There are some of your husband's mother's relatives left, then?"

"I suppose there must be—in Spain, but we came out by way of France and Italy, and didn't go into Spain. And—oh, yes!—there are some in one of the Southern Islands. I found a letter of good wishes waiting for me here in Manila from one of them—a sort of cousin, I think. But I'm not likely to meet her. Dick says she's a very disagreeable person. He doesn't like her, and he vows he'll never ask her down—or is it up?—to visit us. It seems she quarreled with his mother years ago. He was really quite put out at her writing me. He called it sheer impudence. Isn't he ungrateful, after her kind letter?"

"You say it was from a cousin?"

"As near as I could make out. The letter sounded very friendly to me, but I know so little Spanish yet that I understood only about half of it. And Dick was so vexed because she dared to write me at all that he wouldn't translate for me. He fairly threw the letter away."

Crittenden listened, softly tapping the mudguard of the wheel with his swaggerstick. "You had a pretty good idea of what you were coming to, I suppose—the sort of life you'd have to lead in the Philippines?"

"Oh, not at all!—quite the contrary. I hardly knew anything about it at all until I got here. And it's all so interesting. Dick hadn't told me about

things here—not specifically. A man never does think to tell about the things a woman really wants to know. I think my ideas were very vague—in fact, they are yet, of course. I hardly knew even what my husband's business was out here."

"It can't be defined in a word, can it? Isn't he one of those lucky mortals called a capitalist—a man whose business it is to look after his investments?"

Anne laughed. "Not so lucky some times! It depends on the investments, doesn't it? He's to help me establish more milk-stations for the poor Filipino babies. They say they die so terribly fast—and so needlessly. Then, too, I'm going soon to see San Juan del Monte—the hospital for tuberculosis, you know. I believe I can help there. Oh! there are lots of things I can see ahead of me already."

"You mustn't let such things interfere too much with your duties to society—I mean, frivolous society."

"Oh, you're joking. As if I were likely ever to be of any real use!"

"I can imagine even that possibility in your case. But you have certain rights—certain duties—in society here that must be maintained, you know. Besides, it isn't all 'cakes and ale' here, you'll find, perhaps."

"I'm not sure I quite understand. It seems to me as if everyone in Manila had entered into a conspiracy to give me a good time."

"That's good. But there may be exceptions." He shook his head, but with a smile that kept her in doubt as to whether he were in jest or earnest. "There are 'cats' even in Manila, I'm afraid. When a woman is—ah—very pretty, you know, and well gowned, and —married to a capitalist! Well—there are persons

in this little world of ours silly enough to resent her presence."

"Oh, I hope not!"

"I hope not, too. But you must be prepared for a little cattishness. If you encounter any, remember Envy stalks about even in our Pearl of the Orient!"

For a moment, Anne was half inclined to believe that he was indulging his humor at her expense. She knew that to fill a bride's head with all sorts of vague alarms is considered exhilarating sport by a certain type of bachelor. But almost at once she felt assured that Major Crittenden was not of that type. It was probable, then, that he had already heard one of those malicious remarks that women of great pretensions and little security of position sometimes give utterance to.

Under cover of the music, which now began to sound again, Anne observed him closely.

He was leaning with his elbow on the mudguard, his face half turned toward the bandstand. She could see his close-set ear cleanly rimmed by his thick, close-cropped hair—the ample arch of his head behind the ears—his neck, strong yet finely moulded. She remembered that his eyes were very blue.

When the music stopped, she leaned toward him in an impulse of gratitude. "I want to thank you, Major Crittenden—very much."

He started. "I beg your pardon?—Oh!" He faced her fully, and with one hand struck his stick into the palm of the other. "If I really could do something for you—if I only could—I would!"

Upon the whole, she thought him a rather eccentric man.

VII

A MATTER OF NATIONS

AFTER a moment, conscious that the merry talk lately ringing between Mrs. Easton and Bob Duncan had become a silence, Anne turned to find the boy gone and her friend leaning placidly back in her seat.

“Yes, my dear,” said the good lady in response to the other’s unspoken question. “He’s gone—took the bit in his teeth and bolted outright in spite of my most fascinating conversation! I’m afraid I’m getting old. I can’t hold the men any longer! Oh, he went with a ‘by your leave,’ of course. He preserved the amenities to the last—or almost to the last. He even stopped to explain that he wouldn’t disturb you to say good-night because he intended to call on you to-morrow. He saw Helen March somewhere in the distance, and there was no holding him. How he could see anything in this darkness, I don’t know, I’m sure. But ‘away went Gilpin, hat and wig’! I believe he did gasp out something about having an important question to ask—I’ve no doubt *that* means a request for permission to escort her somewhere. He’s a dear boy—so fresh and unspoiled.”

“Isn’t he! Major Crittenden, is it proper to ask if Mr. Duncan is—promising? I feel I know him so well, you see, that I’m immensely interested in his career. He was one of Dick’s best friends at college.”

“I really believe the Constabulary Service is lucky to have gotten him. Just the sort we’re after. He’s intelligent and very much in earnest, and I haven’t

any doubt he'll prove thoroughly resolute—when the time comes."

Mrs. Easton started. "'When the time comes'! You don't think the 'time' is coming soon, do you, Alan?"

"No, no! I was speaking generally. Duncan is about ready for field-work, and he's made me promise to give him the next active duty that turns up—that's all, really."

Mrs. Easton gave him a searching glance, then relaxed with a sigh of relief.

"Thank Heaven! You made me fairly shiver, Alan, old veteran that I am. What with the Moros *always* simmering, and China *almost always*, not to speak of bandits, I tell John I'm ready to jump half the time. Perhaps you were right not to marry into the Army, after all, Mrs. Nelson. It's dreadful to have anyone you—care for in it; or in the Constabulary either, for that matter. Every time there's the remotest hint of *War*—well!—" She shook her head in despair that was only half humorous.

"There are worse things than war," said Crittenden quietly.

She nodded slowly. "Yes—of course."

He leaned forward to see Anne's face. "You'll save me a dance next week—the Governor-General's reception? Please."

"Of course, if you like."

"And Catharine, I count on one from you."

"One! Alan Crittenden, if you don't dance with me at least three times, I'll—I'll get John to challenge you to a duel!"

"I certainly won't give him a chance to challenge

me, then. Three it is. Good-night!" Anne's hand again felt the grip of his fingers, extraordinarily firm and gentle.

Tapping his leg with his stick, he walked slowly into the darkness that lay beyond the circle of light cast by the arc-lamp. Her eyes followed, until they could no longer distinguish him in the shifting throng.

Whether the form that seated itself on a bench at the shadowy edge of the light was his or another's she could not determine. She would have liked to know, for she was aware that a vigorous man can seldom sit quietly even for the shortest space of time—to have the power to do so must denote unusual qualities of mind. The man on the bench sat with arms folded, his head bent forward, his whole body in a quiet almost rigid.

It was long after seven o'clock, and the moon was rising over Intramuros. Its yellowish-green light touched the bastions of the wall, and trickled along the tiles of old Spanish houses. Below their grated windows might soon sound the thrumming of guitars, for the romance of Castile still lingers among the people of Manila. In the moonlight the cross at the top of the campanile of the Church of San José glimmered in an eerie flame.

The wind from the bay, suddenly cool, made Anne shiver a little—she had come without a wrap. Noticing the movement, Mrs. Easton was about to signal the cochero to drive homeward, when two men and a woman came into the circle of light at a point close to the horses' heads. At sight of the woman in the carriage, one of the men hesitated, then came smilingly up to them. His companions sauntered slowly on.

"Why! It's Dick!" exclaimed Anne. "Hello, dear! I thought you were in your office."

Dick's white teeth showed in his quick smile as he bowed to Mrs. Easton, then took his wife's hand and patted it affectionately.

"In the office? So I was, *carissima*. But I thought I'd stroll on the Luneta on my way home—to you. I'm lucky to meet you here just when I thought you were languishing for me at home!"

"Weren't they the Smythbergs with you there?" asked Mrs. Easton.

"Yes. They got out of their carriage for a walk. I happened to meet them."

"Do you like them?"

Dick dropped Anne's hand, and turned a sharp glance on the older woman. Then he smiled. "Ah, Mrs. Easton—I can see you *don't* like them."

"She wears too green a dress—and it fits too tightly!"

Dick laughed outright. "Oh, oh! After that, I've nothing to say. Of course, you can't expect a mere man to understand the subtle significance of gowns! But, after all, isn't that the fault of her dressmaker? Smythberg and I have a good deal of business together. He's my broker, in fact."

Mrs. Easton nodded. She knew that to a civilian the word "business" has almost the same magical and compelling force that "duty" has to a soldier.

"We're just starting home," she said. "Won't you get in? There's plenty of room. Since you've been married so lately, I'll let you sit next to your wife. A—ah! the 'Star-Spangled Banner'!"

Then came what was to Anne's unaccustomed eyes a wonderful and touching sight.

With the first bars of the national air, a hush fell upon the motley throng about the Luneta. All—Americans, Filipinos, Europeans—halted, or sprang to their feet, and faced the bandstand. Then, as the music began to swell, all hats were doffed. Officers and men of the military services rigidly at attention, and civilians in respectful silence, stood beneath the stars of the soft night to do honour to the Great Republic—to the ideal that makes it possible.

Anne felt a lump at her throat, and the pain of tingling tears behind her eyes.

Half unconsciously, her glance sought the bench where the shadowy figure had been sitting. Crittenden stood there at attention,—half in, half out of the light, his right hand holding his cap at his heart, his face absorbed, his eyes held straight before him.

She turned toward Dick. He too held himself gracefully erect, and with bared head. Meeting her glance, he gave her an amused smile, as if to express his tolerance of a half-childish custom.

For the first time, Anne felt a little pang that her husband should be half a Spaniard by birth.

VIII

A GREEN GOWN

ANNE and Dick dined alone that night, dining alone—as Dick gaily put it—being permitted to a bride and groom in Manila, although to those longer married it was a privilege grudgingly conceded. During the season, one must forever be giving or receiving a dinner. In fact, they had accepted the invitation of the Rumongs for the very next night. To have this present chance to maintain undisturbed acquaintance with his wife was a thing he valued highly. Who could tell when so precious an opportunity might occur again?

In religion he avowed himself a pagan—a devotee of the old Greek gods—because he worshipped at the shrine of Demeter, the goddess of the home. Did Anne know that the highest classical authorities held that this goddess was most properly depicted with eyes as gray as morning clouds and hair as bright as moonbeams?

Thus Dick, deliciously complimentary. He was always at his best in such mild jesting, his fun as quick and gentle as his smile.

Analyzing her husband, as the most devoted woman must begin to do after her bridehood has ceased to dazzle by its sheer novelty, Anne reflected that she had seldom seen him in a serious mood. On the other hand, he was never boisterous—never tiresome or crass in his humour. He had not a grain of that wretched facetiousness which is tolerable only to its possessor.

She glanced over the dinner-table and about the room, and drew a breath of satisfaction. The very things before her which she would not have seen in her mother's house made this new home the more interesting to her—besides it was her own, hers and her husband's.

The slow-moving punkah creaking soothingly while it sent a waft of coolness along the table—the bowl of flowers of the *cadena-de-amor*, delicately pink—the sheen of the river beyond the garden, glimpsed through windows so widely drawn that the stars shone in unhindered, as in a mountain camp—the brown faces and white shirts of the servants—the very lizard scuttling noiselessly along a picture frame—each had its charm for the girl's housewifely heart.

Dick, too, was good to look upon, his evening clothes spotless white from collar to doeskin shoes. His hair was brushed back in a boyish fashion, his perfect teeth flashing in his ready smile, his body poised gracefully when he leaned toward her in the act of speaking.

Again she let a happy breath escape her. "To think you've always lived like this, Dick! It seems so strange."

"Does it, dearest?"

"Not the things here; but all those wasted years when we didn't know each other! Were you living in this very house all that time?"

"Oh, always here—except when I happened to be in Europe or America. My father bought the place from an old Spaniard before I was born."

"It hadn't belonged to your mother's family, then?"

“No. She—her people—weren’t so well supplied with this world’s goods as he was, although they weren’t actually poor, I believe.”

“Yet your father left home a poor boy.”

“The Civil War had stripped the place in South Carolina pretty bare, you know—and of course he was the second son. But he was very lucky here—and he worked hard, too. I remember his saying once that anyone could make money in these islands—the soil is so rich, and there are so many opportunities.”

“Your mother used to sit here, at this very table, opposite your father—just as I’m opposite you now! And Dick?”

“Dearest?”

“You must have sat between them—a little, black-haired boy! Or was your hair fair when you were a baby? A baby’s hair often is fair, you know.”

“I didn’t know. But the record of that important fact is lost in the dim beginnings of History!”

“Your mother must have been a brunette, of course. Did she have one of those lovely Spanish cream-and-ivory skins?—and great dark eyes? By the way, you’ve a picture of her, haven’t you?”

“A picture?”

“Yes—a photograph? How stupid of me never to have thought of it before! I should love to see what she looked like. Where is it?”

“It?”

“The photograph, of course, stupid boy!”

“There isn’t one—I think.”

“Not a single picture of your own mother?”

“I don’t know of one, at any rate.”

“How odd!”

“Do you think so? Perhaps it does seem so. I half remember she would never let one be taken—some whim or other. No—I fancy it had something to do with her religion—images of self, and vanity of this world, and all that.”

“Oh, yes. Very likely.”

They talked of indifferent matters while the servants served a *pâté* of shrimps, and crackers made of rice-meal sweetened with shaved cocoanut.

“That Mrs. Easton has rather taken possession of you,” said Dick when the muchachos had withdrawn.

“She’s a jolly sort. She seems to think she knows you well, or rather knows about you. She says you’re likely to be a successful politico.”

“A politico! I? What does she mean by that?” His tone was dry.

“That’s what I asked her. At any rate, I told her I knew you hated politics. I gathered she only means you’re an influential man here, and are interested in the progress of the Philippines.”

He regarded her thoughtfully. “Influential? Hum-m! I hadn’t thought much about it before, but I can see how I might be—economically.”

“But that’s different from being mixed up in politics.”

“I should hope so,” he returned. “Look here! Don’t let Mrs. Easton get too exigent, will you?”

“Of course not. She’s been so friendly with me only because Helen March is visiting her, you know. But don’t you like her, Dick?”

“Oh, yes. Why not? I do think she’s rather absurd. And I like to feel that I’m your best friend.”

She leaned forward to clasp his hand across the table. "You know you are, dear—always."

But his thoughts still hung about Mrs. Easton. "Yes, I think she's downright silly. What was that she said about Julie Smythberg?"

"She seemed not to care for her. Who is she, Dick?"

"And for what a ridiculous reason! Saving your presence, a real woman's reason. Because she wears a tight-fitting green dress! What stuff!"

"It doesn't seem much of a reason, does it? And yet—I didn't see her close, you know—yet I think I can understand what Mrs. Easton means."

"Well, *I* can't!"

Anne laughed, but the sudden asperity of his tone dismayed her a little. She was still too newly a bride to feel anything save consternation at an ungentele word from her husband. Yet, notwithstanding his usual good-humour, such words already had been uttered more than once or twice.

She wondered if Dick and she would have to pass through a "period of adjustment." Nearly all the stories of married life she had read, as well as the confessions of matrons of her acquaintance, had declared it inevitable. In her heart she had bidden such declarations defiance—the happiness of herself and her husband should never be marred even temporarily by bickerings, petty or great! Would her high belief have to be amended? Now and then she feared she saw straws lifted by the wind in that direction. Heigho! But not if a loving wife could win perpetual kindness by complaisance and unfailing good will.

Dick, studying her under cover of his quick smile,

felt a vague discontent at the submission he read in her face. Half unconsciously, he had hoped that a resentful word from Anne would have given him opportunity to come more emphatically to the defense of Julie Smythberg. He was not one to ask himself why he should be concerned about the Englishwoman. The fact that he was so concerned sufficed him.

He did not even think to question himself when, in place of Anne's half-humorous, half-wistful mouth, and shining gray eyes, he seemed to see before him the face of another, impassive, non-committal, yet provocative and subtly challenging.

Dinner over, Anne eagerly complied with Dick's request to "play something," and moving to the piano, accompanied his tenor through half a dozen songs. His voice was not remarkable for range, but rang true enough, and had a certain husky quality which instead of weakening, gave it a power of passionate expression it might otherwise have lacked.

He was striding up and down the room, singing in an operatic strain, when a sound from the doorway brought the song to a full stop. Helen March and Bob Duncan were peering laughingly in upon them.

"We banged the tom-tom," cried Helen, "but the toreador was fighting the bull so fiercely that nobody heard us—so up we came."

"Bob, you young pirate!"

"Old sly-fox, Don Quixote! You look like a real bridegroom. A scene of domestic bliss!"

Dick delightedly took both of Duncan's hands in his own. "And *you* look like a real soldier—tin soldier."

"Ah ha! Jealous of my shoulder-straps, are you!"

Well, I'm jealous of you on account of your wife. What are you going to do about *that*, hidalgo?"

"Laugh you to scorn."

"Because you know you've got the best of me, by Jove!"

They exchanged a hearty punch in the ribs by way of expressing their mutual pleasure.

"We really can't stay more than a minute," declared Helen. "We oughtn't to be here at all—we're supposed to be at a dinner-dance at the English Club. We stole away, and motored over here while the chaperone wasn't looking. Bob said he simply couldn't wait any longer to see Dick and you by your own fireside. We'll have to go back in short order."

"But stay long enough for coffee. I'll have it in again—it's just been taken out."

"Oh, thank you, no," from Helen, and "All right, thanks," from Bob, set them all laughing.

The result was that the two callers lingered the better part of an hour, the men reviving in talk college days not long past, the women discussing a hundred things.

From talk they turned to singing. After college songs, Bob chancing upon a book of old ballads, sang "Drink to Me only with Thine Eyes" in his mellow baritone.

Helen sank into a chair by the window. The rays of the piano-lamp failed to penetrate the shadows so far—she was left to the splendour of the moonlight that fitted a golden fillet upon her brown hair and a golden necklace about her white throat.

As Bob sang, his face took on the look of the boxer, that look a little pathetic which says: "You

may strike me, but you cannot force me to stop smiling."

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sip,
I would not change for thine."

Now and then he glanced wistfully toward the girl at the window, but her eyes, brooding beneath their long lashes, were inscrutable. When he had finished, she insisted that it was high time they should be rejoining their deserted companions at the English Club.

Anne thought the two young people bade her good-night rather quietly.

IX

INTIMATE DISCUSSIONS

At dinner the following night, Donna Dolores Rumong received Anne with winning cordiality. Judged by Caucasian standards Senora Rumong's skin was, perhaps, too dark an olive, but lustrous black hair, and velvet-black eyes, and that half pathetic, half-smiling expression of the mouth often found among Filipinas, made her face almost handsome. But what gave her real distinction was the manner in which her head was poised upon her slender neck, and the ease of her whole bearing. Her age did not much exceed Anne's own.

Her kerchief of pineapple fibre, palest rose in hue, showed her smooth brown shoulders. The loose bodice and voluminous skirt of black silk did not conceal the graceful lines of her figure. The black lace *tapis*, clinging apron-wise about her hips, emphasized the grace of her walk. High-heeled slippers, with jade buckles, held her slim feet.

Another Filipino couple—the Sanchez—had been asked to meet the Nelsons.

In the bustle of greetings and the confusion of introduction, as well as in the fashion of the dinner at once announced upon their arrival, Anne found little that was markedly different from what she had been accustomed to elsewhere. After dinner, however, when the men had betaken themselves to the azotea to smoke their cigarettes, and she was seated with the two

Filipina ladies in the sala, she began to look about her.

“Do you mind if I stare?” she asked.

“Not in de least,” smiled Donna Dolores. “Please do.”

The Rumongs, as perhaps was indicated by their name, were Tagalogs of unmixed blood, but both husband and wife spoke fluent English. Indeed, the only fault that could be found with the former's English was its unnecessary precision. The latter, her husband's junior by a number of years, had not so good a command of the language. Nevertheless, in pronunciation she was in the habit of making only one blunder—she was unable to enunciate *th* in the word *the*, but pronounced it *d*, as do nearly all Filipinos. By a remarkable sleight of tongue, however, the combination seemed to cause Señora Rumong no difficulty when occurring in any other word.

“I have almost nothing in de house worth seeing,” she went on. “My husband likes de rooms bare. I keep them so to please him.”

The furniture of the sala was of native hardwoods, made on massive and severely simple lines. The floor was formed of hand-sawn planks of cogon and narra wood, the golden-amber hue of the one alternating with the chestnut-brown of the other in yard-wide strips, polished every day by the servants who, their feet bound in sacking, skated them to a mirror-like brightness.

A few good pictures adorned the walls, and on a stand in a corner was an exquisite marble of a Danaid crouching hopelessly over her sieve. The Rumongs had had the good fortune to pick this up during a stay in Europe.

To Anne's eyes the most characteristic thing was that visible in a deep alcove of the room. There was set an altar handsomely carved of heaviest ebony, complete with a statue of the Virgin, a cross, and candle-sticks—all of ebony—and lit by tall candles which apparently were never suffered to go out.

She eyed it with reverence, but not knowing what sorrow it might be designed to soothe or what hope to sustain, passed over it without comment in favour of a leather sphere which hung on the wall near her, marked with letters and a date in gold.

“Why! that looks like a basketball!”

“Yes, yes, it *is* a basketball,” said Donna Dolores proudly. “I was de captain of de girls’ team of de High School.”

“Really?”

Her hostess enjoyed her astonishment. “Did you not know we play such games here—all sorts of games—since de Americans came? Oh, yes, very much. I was educated in de American fashion. When it was time for me to be sent to school my mother was very wise. She said to me: ‘You shall go to de American school. There you will learn much more than de good Sisters can teach you at de Escuela Catolica.’”

“That must have taken courage on her part.”

“Yes. My mother was good and kind always—you shall hear. So, then, I went to de public school, but when I began to play basketball my mother was frightened—at de bloomers most of all, you will understand. ‘A girl to play such games! And to play without skirts! Never! It is not proper! No, no!’” Donna Dolores extended her arms stiffly and shook her hands to express her mother’s horror. “But I said to

her: ‘My mother, I wish very much to be well in health all my life. You are hardly twice as old as I, *madre mia*, but already you do not see to read clearly; you cough too much; your poor head aches, oh, so often! And sometimes you think you are called of God to repent, and it is only your stomach.’”

“She had never had a chance to exercise, of course.”

“No. I said to her what I have told you, and my mother prayed on her knees half de night. In de morning, she said to me: ‘My Dolores, you shall play de basketball, but I implore of you, do not take off anything more than de skirts!’”

Anne joined her pretty hostess in her laughter.

“Then, de year I was to enter de University of de Philippines, Señor Rumong went to a dance where many girls were. He said to a friend: ‘Who is that girl who stands so straight, and looks so strong—and so sweet?’ And it was I.” She ended with another happy laugh.

Donna Bella Sanchez listened to all this primly. She herself had not been educated in the American fashion, and had been heard to say that she utterly disapproved of that fashion, not only on account of its manifest impropriety, but also because Americans were for the most part irreligious if not downright heretical. She was unable to deny, however, that Donna Dolores’ education had not in the least diminished her devotion to her religion—a fact which often puzzled Señora Sanchez, at times almost to the point of admitting that there might be good in the American system.

“You like our Maneela, Meesses Nelson?” she now asked with the hesitant utterance of one justly uneasy as to her command of English.

"Very much. It all seems so quaint and charming."

"We have known Don Ricardo, your husband, a long time—Señor Sanchez and I."

"It's delightful to find he has so many friends. They're all so kind to me."

"Yes, yes. Don Ricardo used to be a very great frien' to poor leedle me."

Anne repressed a smile at the other's arch glance. "I think my husband said Señor Sanchez was a member of the Government."

"Of de Assembly of de Philippines. He ees *diputado*—deputy—from hees deestic'. It ees a great responsibeelity for heem. He ees *Urgentista*—for independence, right away."

"Ah, yes," returned Anne vaguely.

The footsteps of the three men now sounded on the tiles of the azotea, lingered a moment while their voices, speaking in Spanish, rose in argument, then moved toward the sala. It seemed to Anne that Dick hesitated at the doorway as if making an effort to induce the others to return to the azotea and finish their discussion. If so, he was unsuccessful, for in a moment all three had joined the women.

Don Bertran Rumong was talking as the men sat down. His face was dark-skinned, and the plumpness of its contours softened the cheekbones that might otherwise have been unduly prominent. His figure, immaculately clad in black evening clothes, was short and inclining to corpulency. It was only his eyes, where a keen intelligence sparkled in black depths, that disclosed the student of affairs no less than of books,

and expressed the force of a sagacious and resolute mind. In age he must have approached forty years.

Miguel Sanchez was a much younger and taller man—slim and quick-eyed. His complexion evidenced that an ancestor not more than two generations before had been a Spaniard. From time to time he touched delicately the ends of his small black moustache with the very tips of his forefinger and thumb.

As the men sat down, Señor Rumong apparently was engaged in refuting a statement of Dick's, for he looked at him first as he spoke—now in English.

“But surely you do not intend to suggest that matters should be adjusted by war.”

“Oh, no,” returned Dick with his quick smile.

Sanchez made a gesture. “If necessary, even by war,” he declared stiffly.

“My dear friend,” retorted the older Filipino with what Anne thought the faintest touch of contempt, “surely you cannot have considered what you are saying.”

“I have conseedered it many times—wis’ much care.”

“No, no! If you knew what it meant, you would not—you could not—talk so lightly. Let me remind you—I am at the least ten years older than anyone here—I myself have seen a little of war. I, now only a ‘scholar in politics,’ as they say of me, I fought under Luna, under Pilar, and I was with Don Emilio Aguinaldo himself on the Pacific Coast when—” He made a sweeping gesture of obliteration.

“Señor Rumong’s illustrious services for eendependence are known even to dose of hees countrymen

who were not old enough to have de honour to fight by hees side."

The other bowed. "I wish they could profit by my experience," he said sadly. "Recall what happened in our war, if you please! The American general, Otis, an officer as cold as ice, repulsed us from Manila. MacArthur—was it not?—drove us beyond Malolos. Then Wheaton, a man like hot fire, scattered us like cold ashes in the North. I joined the army of the South—of Cavite Province. It was no better there! The American Lawton, a raging giant, broke us at the Zapote River."

"It was there you were wounded, *mi marido*," interrupted Donna Dolores, pity in the gentle tones.

His eyes dwelt on her affectionately. "Yes, it was there." Unconsciously his hand fell a moment to his thigh as if he felt again the shattering blow of the bullet.

"After the battle at Zapote Bridge," he went on, "it was the General Bell who ate up Malvar and the army of the South in mouthfuls through Batangas Province. Before that time I had gone over the mountains and joined Don Emilio. You know what happened there. There Funston—a soldier perfectly reckless and perfectly calm at the very same moment, one who fights with a laugh, but thinks, always thinks—Funston captured Don Emilio, and me, by means of a stratagem so wonderful that a Napoleon might have thought of it, and so simple that a child might have escaped from its snare."

"A child! How den was it possible——?"

"Because we were less than children; we were babies in the hands of men like the Americans. Brave babies,

yes—but babies nevertheless. So it is not the wounds and death of our people that I now regret. No, no! it is the uselessness of it all—futility absolute! And if we were mad enough to try war again, the end would be the same—there are other Americans. I tell you, Señores, we were babies in '99—at best we are only growing children now."

Silence followed this half-sad, half-passionate outburst. Anne might have thought it over-oratorical for a drawing-room, had she not felt how intently the others, including even Dick, hung upon the older man's words.

Sanchez rallied himself by a perceptible effort. "But if de Filipino people demand de conseederation of a jury of world statesmen—of great men of all nations—if de Tribunal of de Hague shall say to de United States: 'We find de Filipino people have now a true civeelization, a Filipino civeelization which—'"

"Ah, señor," interrupted Rumong sighing, "I think it is precisely there that we make a mistake. There cannot be such a thing as a 'Filipino civilization' as distinguished from other civilizations. We must be judged not as Filipinos, not even as Americans, but as citizens of the world. We must acquire more of the better qualities of other world-peoples before we can be considered a nation. There is no Filipino nation now—among ourselves we know that well."

Sanchez made a gesture of protest. "Do you say that people is not a nation which has produced a Rizal, a Juan Luna, a Mabini, an Aguinaldo!"

"*Compare* them, Don Miguel!" returned the other mournfully. "Compare them with the patriot, the

artist, the statesman, the general of other nations!" He emphasized the comparison with his sweeping motion. "No! we are not a nation. It is not gratifying to our pride to believe it, but we are not now—how shall I say it?—we are not a *distinguishable* race. We are Malays, pretend to trace back our race-stem to India how you may. We are Malays, and the Malays do not now make history, if they ever did. If they have ever had a real civilization of their own, it is now lost in ruins in the jungles of Sumatra and Java."

He twisted abruptly in his chair, and flung a hand toward the sombre alcove where the lights of the tall candles flickered over the ebony image of the Virgin.

"You know already why those candles burn always. It is at my Dolores' wish in memory of her dear mother. Yes. But in my own mind they burn, also, as a prayer that there may be at last a Republic of the Philippines. But that will not be possible for many years yet—for very many years—if ever. I think we Filipinos will at last succeed as a nation—but I am not certain of it."

"Ah, Don Bertran!" cried Sanchez in real pain. "How can you say so!"

"I am forced to say so. But I believe we have a way to succeed without fail, if we are wise enough to take that way—the road to success for the Filipino nation!"

"And what is de road?"

"Work!" said Rumong almost sternly. "We ought to talk less of culture and of politics, and do more work—in the fields, in the factories, in business, in our coast-wise trade. Work!"

Sanchez leaned back in his chair, and touched his

moustache delicately to hide his sarcastic smile. Rumong surely grew more full of fantastic theories every day. He had been so long out of active political life that he had fallen behind the age. Did he, with all his learning, actually not understand that business—that means of accretion of money which, all pretence aside, was the most vital thing in life to every man—did he not understand that business depended upon politics!

Sanchez continued his reflections: Take his own case. He had heavy investments in Mindanao hemp, so heavy that it made him shudder to think that the price of hemp was steadily falling. Nature would not come to his aid, for the hemp crop promised to be plentiful—too plentiful. Prices would continue to fall. Very well—only politics could keep prices up—not direct legislation, that was impossible, but political manœuvring of some sort. So much was clear. But how? That was a question that required a speedy solution if he was to be able to meet the expenses of his approaching campaign for reëlection to the Assembly.

While Sanchez brooded, Rumong had turned gaily to Anne. "You must not let yourself be disturbed by my talkativeness, Mrs. Nelson. If I have spoken so freely, it is because we already count you as one of us."

"If I heard any treason," laughed Anne, "I didn't recognize it. It was all very interesting to me—what you said. I must make my husband tell me more about local politics."

"No treason—no," declared Señora Sanchez. "And even eef dere were, we are very good frien's of Major Crittenden, de officer of Constabularios." She

assumed a pensive look. "Major Crittenden—he ees a very han'some officer."

Donna Dolores, catching Anne's eye, gave her a downright wink.

As the Nelsons drove home, Anne was disposed to talk over her evening's experiences. Her first glimpse of the inner life of the Filipinos had interested her deeply.

"Had you been advocating immediate independence for the Philippines, Dick?" she asked with curiosity.

"Why not?" he returned with some sharpness.

"Of course—if that's what you believe. I was only wondering what you do believe about it."

"One must say what one thinks. I'm not blind to the faults of the American Government." He was silent for a moment, then went on with sudden frankness. "I'll tell you—I'll be hanged if I know what I do think about the thing!"

They whirled on through the quiet streets. Francisco nodded half asleep over the lines, holding the horses to their course by a sort of mechanical miracle of balancing. A creaking cart passed, drawn by a soft-footed carabao in a fashion infinitely leisurely. On the cart platform a lantern flared redly, the weird glow giving a sinister suggestion of conspiracy to the lean face of the driver.

A Filipino policeman was visible under a street-lamp, his clean khaki uniform adorned with black cloth stripes and silver buttons, the tip of his club unostentatious beneath his coat-skirt. He gave them a polite scrutiny, then touched his cap as they rolled by.

"*Buenas noches*, Hippolito," said Dick kindly. "I

remember that fellow was on this beat last summer," he explained.

After a little he roused himself again. "By the way, what did those women talk about before we men came in?"

"I hardly know—public schools, and odds and ends."

"Not about you and me?"

"They'd hardly do that, would they? Oh, yes! Señora Sanchez threw out a coy hint that you were an old flame of hers. I wasn't a bit jealous." She laughed at the recollection.

"The silly little savage!" said Dick rather brutally. "I never spoke two words to her in my life. Is that all she said?"

"I don't remember. Yes, I think so. Have you anything in particular in mind, Dick?"

"Women of her sort are unnecessarily inquisitive about the—ah—the affairs of a bride, sometimes," he explained vaguely. "I suppose they mean to be polite."

X

THE RIGADOON

WHEREVER leaf hung or fern waved or blade of grass grew in the garden at Malacañan on the night of the Governor-General's reception, there, also, glowed a tiny electric lamp. Lamps drooped from the trees like festoons of fireflies, wound through the shrubbery like the torches of wandering fairies, crawled across the turf like flaming serpents.

Through the illumined shadow, along a curving approach past the pillared gateway, Anne and Dick came to the glare of the porte-cochère—and thence up the broad staircase and across the polished floor to the receiving line.

“Mr. Richard Nelson! Mrs. Richard Nelson!” announced an aide-de-camp.

Anne was conscious that another officer, half-glimpsed in rear of the athletic-looking man who stood at the head of the line, whispered something in the latter's ear. The tired face of the Governor-General instantly took on a winning expression of interest as he held out his hand.

“Ah, Mr. Nelson! I'm glad to see you. Welcome to the Philippines, Mrs. Nelson.” His voice sounded clear even above the noise of the shifting throng.

The handsome woman who stood next repeated her husband's cordial handclasp and welcoming words. Then the Speaker of the Assembly, the Vice-Governor, and the members of the Commission—Americans and Filipinos—each with his wife, received them in turn.

When Anne passed with Dick into the comparative obscurity of the throng at the farther end of the room, she bore with her the warm feeling that her reception had not been a perfunctory one.

"How kind everyone is!" she whispered. "They really seemed to notice us, didn't they? Your father must have been a more important man here than you've confessed, Dick. And you're one, too, of course. That's the reason people are so good to me. The Governor-General's wife is lovely, isn't she?" She turned to look back at that gracious woman and was pleasantly thrilled to see that the latter had leaned forward from the receiving line and was gazing in her direction. "Do you suppose she's looking at us, Dick?"

Dick smiled in his quick, vague fashion. "At you, perhaps. To tell the truth, she's probably studying your gown. I fancy a Paquin like that is interesting even to a Governor-General's wife."

Anne looked disappointed. "Oh! I thought there was something in her eyes more friendly—more personal—than that. But, of course there wasn't."

Dick's eyes were roaming over the crowd that surged slowly along the halls.

"What a mob!" he said. "All the world and his wife—yes, everybody here who ever had presence of mind enough to write his name in the calling-book. And all the celebrities too! There's one—the Chief Justice. Oh, yes, a Filipino. And those three or four men talking so excitedly are Assemblymen—Deputies—native members of the Philippines Congress, if you like. Miguel Sanchez is with them, you see. And that's the most famous member of the Commission—by the balus-trade there. A—ah! how are you, Mrs. Smythberg?"

He plunged into the crowd, and re-appeared guiding a man and woman toward Anne.

"I want you to know my wife," he was explaining. "Anne—Mrs. Smythberg—and Mr. Smythberg."

"How d'ye do?" said Mrs. Smythberg, giving her a firm pressure of a cold little hand. Her husband, a heavy, broadfaced man, contented himself with a heavy bow.

The Smythbergs were English, but in all probability of not remote Germanic extraction. Mrs. Smythberg's upper lip was charmingly short, but her teeth were perhaps a trifle too large for the short lip. Her face was small and oval, and her complexion high-coloured, having, indeed, a hint of artificiality. Her hair was so fair as to look almost colourless in certain lights, and her very light-blue eyes were shaded by flaxen lashes. She was gowned with an un-British perfection of taste, simply yet elegantly. On the whole, by gifts both of nature and of art, Julie Smythberg was a very pretty woman.

"I called on you the other day," she said. "I do hope you got our cards. If your muchachos are at all like mine, one's cards often don't get farther than the patio."

"Oh, yes, I found them; I'm sorry we missed you."

"You'll come to see me soon, won't you? My house doesn't compare with yours, of course, but everyone says I always have first-chop tea."

Before they could do more than exchange such commonplaces, a movement of the crowd separated Anne from the group. The living current bore her away, past banks of white mess-jackets, about promontories of cassocks, against boulders of brass-buttoned coats,

through the foam of satin and piña and silk gowns.

An eddy cast her, rather breathless, far down the hall, into the arms of Helen March who seized upon her with a cry of delight. Captain and Mrs. Easton stood smilingly by, and Bob Duncan grinned cheerfully in the immediate background.

“Out at first! How’s that, umpire?” cried Helen with a twinkle at Bob. “No use to try to make a home-run now. It’s too early.”

“I’ve lost my husband.”

“Only temporarily, I hope. It serves him right. We’ll protect you until he turns up.”

“A jam, isn’t it?” said Mrs. Easton.

“Yes. I was swept along like a chip. But such interesting-looking people as there are here! Just see those gorgeous uniforms over there. Who are they? —the men inside them, I mean—generals? Why! there’s Dick talking to one of them now—and the Smythbergs, too.”

“Generals?” grinned Bob. “They’re only consuls of various nations.”

“I recognize that Mr. Gorsjiu now—the Japanese consul. He called the other day. He doesn’t look in the least like a Japanese, does he? Look—over this side! Who is the very good-looking—the very reverend-looking priest? A Filipino, isn’t he?”

“He *is* a Very Reverend,” said Captain Easton. “A potentate of the Independent Catholic Church, the Philippines Church, you know. That’s to the regular Roman Catholic Church out here now about what the Anglican Church was in England in Henry the Eighth’s time—property quarrels and all—except that it hasn’t got the backing of the powers that be.”

"I've come into a new world, haven't I?—with vital questions of its own being handled every day."

"Every minute," returned Captain Easton. "But that particular question—the power of the Roman Catholic Church—is the old one *redivivus*. Some people say that the regular Romanists are as dominant in these Islands under us Americans as they ever were under the Spaniards—in a different way, of course. In my opinion, it's a political mistake that'll cost the Islands dear in the long run."

"There's opposition here to the Roman Catholic Church, then—among the Filipinos?"

"Oh, no, not at all—as a church. But as a political force, yes—a great deal of it."

"Let's find a seat to watch the rigadoon," suggested Helen. "We'd better find a good place before the room gets too crowded."

"I'm just in time," said a voice behind them. Major Crittenden at Anne's shoulder included the others in his bow. "I've been looking everywhere for you, Mrs. Nelson. The Governor-General sends me to say that a couple who were to dance the rigadoon have unexpectedly fallen out. He wishes me to ask you and Mr. Nelson to take their places. I've had the honour to be appointed your partner. Mr. Nelson has already been provided for."

"Thank you, and the Governor-General, very much indeed. But what *is* the rigadoon? Of course, I know it's some sort of dance, but I don't know it at all. I've never even seen it—and so I think I'd better not try it."

"Anne!" cried Helen in mingled horror and triumph, "you *can't* refuse, child! It's a *command*,

don't you understand? And a *compliment!* My dear, it's *the* honour of the whole season—the formal figure of the greatest affair given in Manila. It's—it's the same as being knighted! You're in luck! It's like the Virginia reel, only not half so lively. And Major Crittenden knows all about how to dance it. He's done it *hundreds* of times; he'll pull you through."

"The music's about to begin," he urged.

Anne began to share in the excitement that had seized her friends. "Oh, thank you! I'll come, of course. I didn't understand. Do I look all right, Helen?"

"Lovely!" Helen fluttered about her. "That gown is simply ravishing. Let me tuck in this lace a little—no need to waste a neck as perfect as yours! Your hair is—perfect! There. All right! Hurry along!"

Anne laid her hand on Crittenden's proffered arm, and the crowd parting before them as if magically informed of their purpose, they made their way to the ballroom.

XI

IN THE DARK

COMPARED with what it may have been when danced by Lady Betty vis-à-vis with Galloping Dick on a midnight heath—the coach in the ditch, my lady's woman in hysterics, and the frightened postillions at gaze under the spell of a brace or two of yard-long horse-pistols—compared with this the rigadoon presently danced at the Governor-General's Palace of Malacañan is in itself a dull affair enough. Nevertheless, it has its full share of importance and charm.

Importance is given it by the status of some of those who take part in its easy saunterings, and by its significance for others whose standing has not before been assured. Charm is given it by grace of pretty women and athletic men, their figures reflecting equally in the mirrored walls and the polished floors. As the dancers weave back and forth, on the one hand they may glimpse Luna's paintings—seen sidelong across a vista of hallways—and on the other, through wide windows, may descry the blue-black darkness spangled with stars beyond the veranda.

The Governor-General's wife regarded Anne with her sweetly-grave look, and His Excellency himself nodded at her merrily. Dick gave her a smile from the opposite end of the room, where he trod the measure with Donna Dolores Rumong. A Japanese marquis bowed low over her hand. A tall Englishman, a raja of Borneo in his own right, balanced to her gravely. Other dignitaries and dignitaries' wives moved with and

about her, while Major Crittenden, self-possessed and skilful, guided her from turn to turn.

Without being aware of it, she herself was notable even in that assemblage. Her figure, not too tall, its soft curves set off by her clinging gown, her creamy neck, and throat full rather than slender, her hair harvest-gold in hue, and her eyes sea-gray and shining with health and pleasure—these things helped to make her the most interesting person in the room for some of those who watched her.

When the dance was over, she found herself surrounded by a little court—men asking Crittenden to present them, and women who spoke to her cordially without waiting for formalities. So much kindness was bewildering and very delightful to the girl. Responding to it with buoyant enjoyment, she looked about for Dick to share her pleasure, but he was not to be seen.

At last, a little weary, she turned to Crittenden, who had been standing vigilantly at her shoulder.

“Sha’n’t we go out on the veranda?” she asked. “It looks delightfully cool and quiet out there.”

“I was on the point of dragging you away willy-nilly. This sort of thing is pretty tiresome at best.”

They moved from the glare of the lights toward the pleasant shadows without. Glancing back from the doorway, Anne’s eyes fell on Dick and Gorsjiu, the consul, in company. The latter had hooked a familiar arm through her husband’s, and was guiding him toward a side stairway, as if in search of refreshment below.

Gorsjiu was a sallow-skinned, hollow-chested man, spare of flesh, and although very tall for his race, drooping in figure. Although not yet middle-aged, his

hair was almost white. His nose was unusually long and large, broad at the base and coming to an edge along the ridge—a predatory nose, but the nose of the crow rather than the hawk. The contrast between Gorsjiu's almost grotesque appearance and Dick's graceful figure and handsome face made Anne laugh outright.

“Dick and that Mr. Gorsjiu look so queer together,” she smiled in response to Crittenden's inquiring glance.

They found a bench in a quiet angle of the wide veranda. Below them a couple of men, hardly visible in the shadows, emerged from beneath the veranda, and stood on the wide flagstones, talking in muffled tones. The river flowed at their feet, its oily surface giving back a metallic glitter to the touch of the moon. Now and then a canoe drifted noiselessly past. From across the stream came the monotonous but not unmusical crooning of voices singing an hour-long chant.

By the dim light of a Moro lantern which swung above them, Anne smiled at her companion.

“Do you know,” she said, “I’ve guessed something.”

“Guessing is dangerous work.”

“But I’ve done it.”

“Something proper for me to hear?”

“Expressly meant for you, sir! I didn’t understand until just now, when people rushed up to me so, what it means to be asked to dance the rigadoon at His Excellency’s reception. Well—I believe I owe it to you.”

“No. To His Excellency’s wife—and your charm-

ing self. That last isn't meant as a compliment—only as a statement of fact."

She made a little *moue*. "His Excellency's wife? She never saw me until a little while ago."

"But she had heard of you in advance, you know. We're too truly insular here not to know all about our neighbors—or think we do. The fame of a certain American girl who had married Richard Nelson had reached us here."

She leaned forward, a new thought in her mind. "O-oh! it was you who called the Governor-General's attention to us as we came in!"

"If I did, that's a regular part of my duty."

"Your duty?"

"If I must tell you a State secret, your husband's support of the powers that be is worth trying for. He's a newcomer to the Islands—I mean as a grown man acting for himself. He has property, therefore power—at least potentially. The brute power of great possessions—yes, and their subtle power, too, is nothing less than terrible! His opinions aren't very well known—the Government wants him with it."

"But of course he'd be with the American Government. He's an American!"

"Yes—of course—as you say. But Government wants his active influence, not just the passive attitude of the ordinary 'good citizen.' Government wants him prominently on its side, if the time comes when he's needed. Do you see?"

"O—oh!" she said slowly, a little awed by this glimpse of diplomatic machinery. "That's why the Governor-General is so nice to us?"

"That's only a part of it. You yourself are nine-

tenths of the reason. You won't betray that confidence, will you?"

She shook her head. Then the faintest shadow of relief that passed from his face made her suddenly suspicious. "Br'er Rabbit, I reckon you're layin' low about sumpin'. I sholy kin see a debbil-debbil in yo' eye!"

"What makes you think so?"

"Why! I—well—"

"I'll say it," he interrupted boldly. "It's because you know I liked you at once—when I met you Saturday, on the Luneta. You saw I liked you immensely, and at that time we happened to speak of the Governor-General's reception. Well, is there any harm in that? You like to be liked, don't you? You wouldn't prefer to be hated at first sight, surely! That would be barbarous!"

"Now you're making fun of me!"

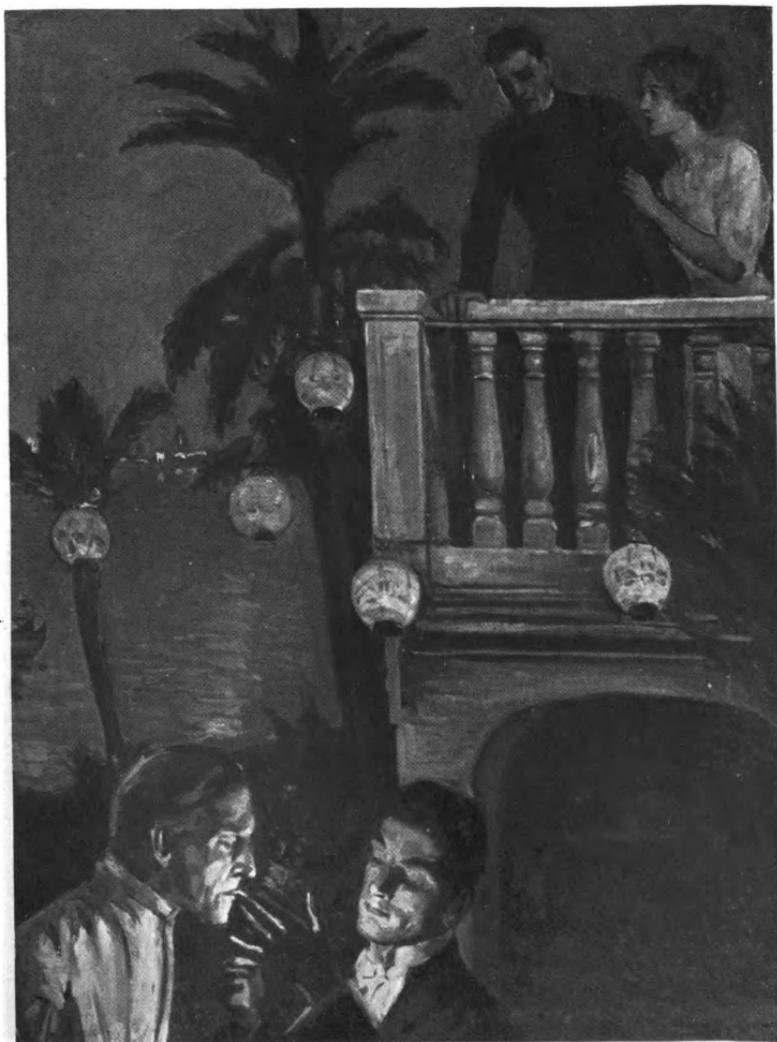
"No more than I have to in self-defence," he returned obscurely.

She did not realize until afterward how effectually she had been diverted from the point at issue.

The shadowy forms of the two men on whom they had been looking idly down, drew closer together. There was the sputter of a struck match, and in a little halo of flame the shorter man was seen to be offering a light for the other's cigarette.

Anne laughed softly—the light rimmed the faces of Dick and Gorsjiu. Crittenden, too, gazed down with curiosity—the conference of the two men had been held in whispers.

As they looked, the consul, raising his disengaged hand, made a rapid and peculiar gesture. Dick, in the



AS THEY LOOKED, THE CONSUL, RAISING HIS DISENGAGED HAND, MADE
A RAPID AND PECULIAR GESTURE

act of leaning toward the lighted match, cigarette in mouth, eyed him in blank surprise. Then the match went out, and Gorsjiu could be heard coughing violently, as if the fumes of the sulphur had gotten into his throat.

Anne, glancing at Crittenden, was amazed. He had started to his feet and, his face sternly set, was staring down into the darkness. For a moment, she shrank from him, half in fear of the man suddenly grown so menacing, half in the thrill of an excitement she could not understand. Then she laid a timid hand on his arm.

“What is it! Is anything the matter?”

He started and turned toward her. His face resumed its habitual calm, and he smiled slowly.

“No—nothing.”

“But you seemed——”

“Well—I thought, just for an instant, I saw a—snake.”

“A snake!” Anne peered anxiously over the railing.

“But you see the men—your husband and Gorsjiu—have strolled away into the garden, so they aren’t bothering about it. It may have been only a flicker of the nerves of my eyes. Perhaps it’s time I was getting a rest from my official duties. I fancy I need a trip to Baguio.” He turned carelessly away from the railing. “Sha’n’t we go inside? Remember, Br’er Rabbit engaged a dance from Mis’ Meadows several days ago—a real dance on his own personal account, not a mere official saunter.”

She assented, and they went in. Nevertheless, as they glided into a waltz to the swaying music of the

Constabulary Band, she could not but puzzle over his momentary display of excitement—of emotion—she could fairly call it that! Had it been caused merely by the sight of a snake on the river's brink? Or was it possible that the awkward gesture of that odd-looking Japanese consul had had something to do with it?

Although she wondered, yet when she had a chance to ask Dick about the matter, she hesitated so long—Dick had an irritable way with him at times—that at last she put the question quite aside. Gradually the incident slipped from her mind.

XII

UNDER THE GREEN LAMP

DANCING had been in progress an hour or more when Crittenden, sauntering moodily along a hallway of the Palace, was aware of a hand that beckoned him from a room at his left. In the obscurity, the gleam of it for a moment seemed to his absorbed mind that of a woman's pale cheek.

Obeying the signal, he found himself in the Governor-General's private office. A green-shaded drop-light left the room in semi-darkness, and only partly illumined the face of the man who sat at a low and wide desk of red narra-wood.

Crittenden peered, baffled by the shadows. "Is that you, sir?"

"Yes—resting a little from my strenuous labours as host. The President shakes hands with his tens of thousands, but the Governor-General has gripped his thousands at least—many of them Philistines in both cases! Sit down, Crittenden. You seem to be in a brown study."

"A blue one, at any rate. I'm afraid I have an imaginative mind. Perhaps I've been too long in the Islands. Sometimes a thing like imagination is troublesome to one's self."

"But extremely useful to one's friends—and to Government. Your 'imaginative mind' is only another name for your power of looking ahead. It has already saved us thousands of lives and millions of pesos—that imagination of yours. I count a deal on

your faculty of second sight, Crittenden. You know that."

The Governor-General had leaned forward as he talked. His face now showed more clearly in the cool radiance that appeared to come as much from the polished surface of the great desk as from the light above it.

His eyes, deep-sunken above thin cheeks, betokened an ample share of that power of imagination with which he had credited Crittenden. His short, thick hair was slightly shot with gray. His eyebrows were very black and thick. The lines of nose and jaw were long. His whole expression was good-humoured rather than severe or even reserved, yet few could tell what thoughts went on behind that quiet smile.

"What do you think about the reception?" he asked. "Is it a success?"

"More successful this year than ever before. Everyone is here to-night, all factions—Federalista, Progresista, Nacionalista, Independista, Inmediatista, Urgentista—everything. Differences have been forgotten for a while; socially, at any rate. And this is sure to set an example for the unofficial as well as the official affairs of the season. Filipinos and Americans are bound to draw closer together."

"I think so, too. It ought to be easy for both to be friendly personally even if now and then we don't agree politically. Of course, that's just the reason so many Filipinos won't associate with us socially—because they're afraid it would lead to political friendliness as well."

"And it would."

"Of course—and it's bound to come—real political

friendliness. By the way, the newcomers—the Nelsons—*are they* a success?"

"She is, at least; thanks to you, sir."

"No thanks to me. I only acted on my wife's suggestion, and I fancy *that* was instigated by *you*. If my having Mrs. Nelson to dance the rigadoon did any good, I'm very glad."

"She held a reception of her own afterward. I had to rescue her from the crowd almost by force."

"That's good! But what about the husband? We've shown him our good-will—he's clever enough to understand what we are doing, isn't he? Will he back us up, do you think?"

"I think it's too soon to say, sir. I doubt very much if he has answered that question even in his own mind yet. Judging from what little I know about him, I should say he was—well, not weak exactly, but reluctant to face a question—to come to a decision. But he'll have to answer this question soon—one can't escape it in the Islands. He's thinking about it at this very minute, I'm sure. It's already been brought pretty sharply to his attention."

The Governor-General rested his long chin in his hands, and gave the other a penetrating glance. "You mean to-night—here? How so?"

The picture of Gorsjiu—his figure, abnormally thin, his consumptive shoulders, his hair, preternaturally white, his beak-like nose—the beak of the crow rather than of the hawk—of Gorsjiu leaning toward Dick Nelson with a gesture peculiar, furtive, insistent, rose to the mind's eye of Crittenden.

Briefly he told what he had seen and how he had seen it. Into his account there stole the pathos of the

situation when the wife had looked down upon the husband, both ignorant of the danger that threatened them.

When he had finished, the Governor-General began to trace imaginary patterns on the desk with the tip of a long forefinger.

“That sign—was it——?”

“Yes. The recognizing sign of the Katipunan.”

“The society of conspiracy and assassination! Well, what do you make of the fact that Gorsjiu seems to be one of them?”

“That’s just it, sir; I’m puzzled. He’s about the first out-and-out foreigner that ever knew that sign-manual—except of course those of us whose business it is to know such things.”

“Evidently it’s his business, too,” said the older man grimly. “Well—what then?”

“I can’t say yet. There’s one thing, though, that sticks in my mind. It may have no connection, but—You remember a few months ago one of our men sent in a report that there was a party of Japanese mapping the country about Pulanak in northern Luzon?”

“Yes—I think I do. But that may have been only a party of hunters, after all. They were only seen by one man, if I remember rightly.”

“He was a reliable one, though. And whether those men were hunters or military surveyors, they disappeared very suddenly. A yacht can slip down from Formosa and back again almost overnight, you know.”

The Governor-General’s shaggy brows hid his eyes. “Hum-m! Then you think Gorsjiu is stirring up old embers here on the promise of help from Japan?—You

think he needs Nelson because Nelson is wealthy, and rifles and ammunition cost money? Is that your idea?"

"I don't say so—no, sir. But I mean to find out after what I saw to-night."

The Governor-General again traced imaginary patterns on the shining wood of the desk. "What a pity, Crittenden! That madman's 'Society' has been the ruin—yes, the death—of more of its own members, many times over, than it has been of men on its own list of *proscriptos*. Yet it will always let itself be used by a rascal for his own selfish purposes. The children! The poor brown children!" His deep-set, brooding eyes expressed the sorrow of a father for erring sons. "If they would only be patient, Crittenden."

"Yes. But there's always some foreigner such as our white-haired friend, to spur them on. Why not have him removed before he makes mischief?"

"But we're warned now. You will make your arrangements about this matter?"

"Yes, sir, of course, but——"

"If Gorsjiu's government sent us someone in his place, we'd be no better off than now. A known enemy is better than an uncertain friend. We know where Gorsjiu stands."

"But what about Nelson? He isn't committed yet. I'm sure of that. He didn't recognize the signal. But in Gorsjiu's hands he——"

"Nelson must take his chance. If he hasn't character enough to resist, we can't supply him with it." The muscles of the Governor-General's face had suddenly propped his jaw like bars of steel.

"It's not the man I'm thinking of," said Crittenden steadily. "It's—the woman."

"Of course; his wife. Poor girl!"

His face softened; his hand went over his eyes as if the light hurt them, dim as it was. "I don't have to remind *you*, Crittenden, of the responsibilities of Government—both of us do our duty as we see it." He went on quickly as if he divined the thought in the other's mind. "Yes, I know opinions may differ as to what duty demands of us in any particular case. Governing men—men such as the Lord has been pleased to put on earth!—you and I know that's the most difficult work in the world, the most complicated, and the most wearing. Wasn't it Gustavus's chancellor, Oxenstiern, who discovered with how little wisdom the world is governed? That's because every act of Government touches a thousand wishes and fears and hopes—yes, and passions and emotions—of the governed—touches them for good or evil or both at once. And all those personal feelings react on the feelings of the men who make up the Government."

Crittenden had listened with a composed face, although, had there been more light, one might have seen a faint red underlying his fair skin.

"I think I understand you, sir. But she's only a girl, and deep waters are all about her—and she doesn't even know it. I'm willing to hew to the line with anyone—even with you—but I believe the best thing to do in this case is to have Gorsjiu quietly recalled by his own Government."

"Then you assume that Nelson will take Gorsjiu's bait—whatever that may be?"

"Well, sir, after all, looking only at the material

side of things, what can you do for Nelson? What can you offer him? He's a very rich man. He doesn't need money, and he's not at all the sort to love it for its own sake—so money's no object to him. As for power, isn't a commissionership, with a portfolio to be sure, the highest place that could ever come his way? On the other hand, Gorsjiu, representing the nation he does, may offer all sorts of dazzling inducements—the vaguer they are the more dazzling."

"But don't you give him credit for some devotion to his father's country?"

"It won't do to count on it. No, sir. Get rid of Gorsjiu is my advice—the sooner the better."

The Governor-General regarded him with a half-quizzical smile. "Oh, you have a soft heart, Crittenden, in spite of your reputation for resolution. *I* know you. Let me see— You were a mere boy when you led the 'point' up Camino Real, the day we took Manila from the Spaniards."

"That capture has meant a lot of trouble for you, sir."

"Ha! I refuse to be diverted. You led the charge past Malate Church that day, but you let someone else capture the colours when you'd almost laid hands on them. You stopped to give a wounded Spaniard a drink from your canteen, didn't you?"

"The poor devil was choking of thirst."

"I hope he had time to thank you before he died. Well, a year or two later, it was you who held a drum-head court-martial on Papa Felipe. If I remember the story, the old bandit had murdered three of your Macabebe Scouts in cold blood, and you caught him,

court-martialed him, and hanged him on the spot the same morning.”

“I’ve never been able to feel sorry for that.”

“No, nor I. And then you looked up his widow, and kept her supplied with rice at your own expense for a year or more—until the old beldame supplied herself with another husband.”

“How in the world did you learn——”

“I tell you I *know* you! I’ve heard some story of a man who got a spear-thrust through his arm at the Bud Dajo fight because just as he was about to shoot down the Moro spearman who rushed him, he realized it was a woman—and so he wouldn’t fire.”

“No one would shoot a woman.”

“When I hunted over in Cochin China, I never heard that it paid to be chivalrous toward a tigress! But the point is——” He paused. His half-quizzical smile changed to one serious, sympathetic, almost tender. “Crittenden, if you can keep Nelson out of mischief, do it. But if he will plunge into it, we mustn’t let any consideration of anything else—of anyone else, even his wife—keep us from doing our duty.”

There was a long silence. The green-shaded lamp swung gently to and fro, moved by a vagrant breeze. Shadows danced grotesquely on the burnished surface of the desk, drew a veil from brow to chin of the Governor-General, made Crittenden’s impassive, brooding face a dusky mask.

The older man was the first to speak. “Mrs. Nelson—a daughter of Judge Churchill, isn’t she?—Judge Churchill of South Carolina?”

“Yes.”

“And she really doesn’t—know?”

“No. I’m sure of it; as sure as an outsider can be.”

“Well—it may work out all right.”

“I hope so.”

An aide-de-camp knocked at the door, and the Governor-General glanced up inquiringly.

“The guests are beginning to go, sir.”

“Very well. I’ll come.” He rose as he spoke.

“Will you join us, Crittenden?”

“Of course, sir, if you want me.” He, too, rose.

“No, no; not unless you like.”

“Then I’ll stay here a while longer, if I may.”

“Very well. Good-night.”

“Good-night, sir.”

The other looked back from the doorway. Crittenden had resumed his seat. His arms were folded, and his head was sunk on his chest. The shadows masked his face.

XIII

POLO, AND A VERSE

A SOLDIER, heavy billet of wood in hand, banged gleefully on the old circular saw that by long-established custom did duty as a bell. Not for a brace of trained ponies would any member of the Polo Club have consented to change that precious bit of equipment for aught more modern.

At the signal, the rival Cavalry teams left the field, and the Civil Government and the Field Artillery fours took their places. Bob Duncan rode with the Civil Government team, for the Constabulary is an arm of the Civil Government, and Bob's fame as a polo player had preceded him to the Islands. He sat, square-shouldered and eager, on a dancing chestnut gelding.

Crittenden, playing with the Cavalry four from Fort McKinley, had just had a principal part in the defeat of their rivals from Camp McGrath. Anne's eyes involuntarily followed his lithe figure as he dismounted, crossed in front of the grandstand, and moved lightly toward the dressing-rooms.

In no great while she heard his voice behind her. "Won't you come and have tea?"

She turned to find him newly arrayed in white uniform, his face aglow from his bath.

"Yes, if you like. Tea, Helen?" she asked the girl who sat beside her.

"I told Bob I'd sit up here and cheer for him," Helen returned. "He'll need it by the time he gets through playing, poor fellow! The Civil Government

is awfully weak this year. I'm afraid they'll be dreadfully beaten."

Anne glanced about for Dick, but seeing that he had drifted toward a green parasol which she knew shaded Julie Smythberg's Saxon beauty, she led the way to a little table set on the lawn overlooking the bay.

Crittenden studied her quietly as they sat down. That day she seemed to him more than ever gray of eye, her face flower-like above a body slender and not too tall. Her teeth shone small and white, and when she smiled, the glint of them flashed up to her eyes, and there puckered the corners of them and drooped the lashes until he had a feeling of being smiled at by a pair of friendly goddesses peeping from a bower.

Meeting his look she gave him a droll smile. "Now, I wonder why I came out here so meekly, when the game is just getting exciting!"

"Perhaps because I asked you."

"Hum-m! Is that a reason?—reason enough?"

"You knew how much I wanted you to come and sit here—to pour tea for me. I think you've poured tea for me before, but never for me only—alone."

"Did I know all that?"

He twirled his cap gaily on the silver tip of his swaggerstick, but his blue eyes met hers with a hint of seriousness.

"I hope so—in your subconsciousness, at any rate. You and I—are . . . *sympatica*."

It was true that, almost from their first meeting, they had been drawn toward each other, felt themselves responsive to each other's words, mutually cognizant of subtleties of meaning, sympathizing with finer

moods. This quiet, friendly-mannered man always gave her a sense of protection in this Oriental world, a world strange to her in spite of the weeks that had passed since she had come to it. She was not at all disturbed that, as evidenced by his last words, he should be in some sort aware of this feeling.

Except for the muchacho hovering in the background, they were quite alone. The second polo game was well under way; from the field came the "smack" of mallet against ball, and more faintly, the sound of hoofs madly drumming the turf.

The green lawn where the tea-drinkers sat ended at a breadth of mouse-coloured sand that slipped from its mantle of grass like a bather from his robe, and ran down to plunge beneath the waters of the bay.

Near the water's edge sprawled translucent jelly-fish half a yard in diameter, ink-blue, green, and amber. Tiny crabs skurried along the beach, and from a little depression a shellfish spouted up a jet of water and sand full three inches high, like the "blow" of a fairy whale.

It lacked nearly an hour of sunset, but already the shadow of the night had a little dimmed the sun's glory. As the air freshened with the dying sun, two or three fishermen who had been toiling at a weir a few yards off shore, ceased to work, drew in their stone anchor, and got way on their canoe. The spear-headed paddles made no sound as they dipped. The bamboo outriggers whispered to the water.

A thatched casco drifted by toward Cavite. Now and then one of the family inhabiting that floating home pushed at a sweep, cheering the exertion by a melancholy chant.

The gentle melancholy of the song, the calm of the failing day, the splendour of the distant violet-hued mountains, the whisper of the miniature waves along the beach—perhaps, unconsciously to herself, the influence of the man opposite her—wrought in Anne a sudden understanding of this tropical land. She became aware that if the time should ever come when she must leave it, its memory would tug always at her heart.

“ You’ve begun really to feel it all, haven’t you? ”

She opened startled eyes upon him.

“ I could see it in your face,” he explained.
“ They’ve gripped you—the Islands? ”

“ Yes. Oh, yes, they have! I’m getting to feel the soul of things here—a little. I love it all.”

She began to pour the tea. “ Well, I mustn’t neglect practicalities. Sugar? Two lumps? I’ll put one on your plate.”

He repeated her words. “ “ Sugar? Two lumps? I’ll put one on your plate! ” That sounds exactly like a quotation from Browning. What is it someone calls him?—‘ Old Hippity-Hop of the Accents ’? ”

“ So it does—as if it might mean something; something esoteric.”

“ Not so very esoteric. I hope it means you know I’m glad to have you here, putting sugar in my tea.”

“ Oh, as to that—”

“ To a homeless man you’re one of the most satisfying sights in the world.”

“ Do you mean that you are homeless? ”

He leaned back in his chair, and surveyed her over his half-lifted cup. “ Well, I don’t live in a treetop like a wild Negrito, but it’s about the same

thing—I live in the Santa Lucia Barracks. All well enough in its way—but a home is a woman, not a house, you know."

"Poor forlorn bachelor!—take another cheese sandwich! But you're wedded to your work, aren't you? Everyone says so."

"What a terrible reputation! Is that the sort of thing that's being said about me! Wedded to my work? Hum-m! I suppose I am—there being nothing else to wed."

"But there are lots of pretty girls out here. Isn't one of them attractive enough for you? One or another might possibly be persuaded."

"You're a desperate matchmaker, aren't you?—like all brides."

"Of course I am—though I'm hardly a bride any longer. Only the other day, Dick was laughing at me for calling myself one."

She fell silent, and in a sudden dream, turned her head toward the grandstand behind them. His glance following hers, caught the glint of a green parasol. It seemed to him that the faintest shadow appeared between her soft eyebrows.

After a moment she went on, evidently unaware that there had been a pause in their conversation. "I'm a matchmaker, of course. Yet, in your case—I don't know—I'm not sure—"

"What?"

"I can't think of any girl just now who'd really do for you, except Helen March, of course. She'll make somebody a dear wife, when she sobers down." She was almost thinking aloud. "You aren't the ordinary sort of man—a *silly* girl would make you dread-

fully unhappy, and—" She checked herself, laughing. "Hear me! A woman *does* get quite daft over marrying off all her friends—you're right!"

His face lighted. "Then I'm really one of your friends? If I am, please pour a little tea from your cup on to the grass—as an offering to the gods, you know."

"Delicious!" she laughed. "You're an out-and-out pagan."

"Really," he urged. "Pour a libation, if you're really willing to let me be one of your friends."

"Of course! There, then!" She tossed some drops on the turf between them. "Oh, superstitious soldier!"

He gave a sigh of satisfaction. "Good! It's settled. Nothing can change *that*—after that sacrificial rite. Mind! hereafter I shall claim the privileges of a friend."

"Not to scold me, I hope."

"No—to help you when you're in trouble—if you ever are. That's what a friend's for."

The soberness in his tone made her a little self-conscious. It might be well to make clear to him that she attached no importance to his words. Yet such caution on her part would be prudish—he might even not understand what she meant. Besides, the advice of a man self-possessed, experienced, resolute, and very kind, was a potential help for any woman. She decided to take the matter lightly.

"Trouble? I'm sure I'll never have any in these Islands of the Blessed." She looked about at the green turf where they sat, the pergolas at each end of the club-house, heavy with the purple bougainvillea flower,

the blue-black bay in front of them, the violet heights of the Mariveles Mountains. "I do love them!"

"I'm glad! These Islands are worth while—worth while working for, I mean, until the time comes when they can be left to work for themselves."

"But—Dick was saying the other day that the Filipinos are suspicious of the sincerity of Americans."

"I think he's mistaken there. I believe in the bottoms of their hearts almost all the *gente ilustrada* realize that we really and truly are trying to do right by them. Some of them meet us half-way—and of course some of them don't come a step. There are a few rogues everywhere, you know—even in America! Of course, we'll have to combine firmness with kindness for a while here yet, but we try to keep the velvet on the glove so thick that the iron doesn't leave a bruise. I believe we're succeeding. At any rate, we're honestly doing our best."

She was conscious of an unusual thrill in his voice. His cheeks were faintly flushed. His eyes were bright as if with a vision of the future.

Anne looked at him with a new respect. Here, at a tea-table with her, was one of the men whose enthusiasms inspire and make tolerable the world. Although his duty as a Constabulary officer must sometimes bring him into contact with the pettiness, the deceit, the self-seeking, the cruelty, even the horror of life, yet he believed in the sweetness of life as a whole. Although he could have no sentimental illusion as to the native ability of an untutored people, yet he believed profoundly in the possibility of the development of this people toward the attainment of justice and kindness and truth in their dealings with each

other, and toward the maintenance of these virtues when the people should be left to themselves.

He had said, in effect, that he believed the great undertaking would succeed—that America, through her children, was carrying out an ideal. Anne understood—an ideal of service to humanity, of devotion to justice and honour. She felt an answering warmth of purpose, an eager desire to put her shoulder to the wheel in the Great Experiment.

America was carrying out an ideal, but Anne Nelson felt the need to consider America concretely: Alan Crittenden met that need. Surely, his ideal of duty was worth the struggle to attain it!

“Were you ever at Princeton?” she asked suddenly. “Do you remember the verse on the sundial there?”

“I’ve been in Princeton, yes, but only for a few hours. I don’t remember the sundial. What was the verse?”

“Just a few lines—very inspiring. No, not so much inspiring as—rewarding. Oh, no matter—I sha’n’t quote them.”

She felt a desire to know more of his life—to grasp intimately his personality. “Have you been in the Constabulary long?”

“A number of years now—but I’ve been in the Islands still longer.”

“Mrs. Easton was telling me that you’re really in the Army, detailed for duty with the Constabulary.”

“Yes. I was sent here straight from West Point.”

“And since?—what have you done?”

He gave her an inquiring glance, then went on quietly as if he acknowledged her right to know all of

him. "Well, the Insurrection here. Then I saw the Boxer business in China. Afterwards I had a couple of years in Europe, studying up on professional subjects—armies and languages."

"And after Europe, what?"

"I've been on duty with the Constabulary pretty much all the time, except six months I had at home last year."

"O—oh! I know you now!"

"I hope so—by this time—a little," he laughed.

"You said you'd been in Princeton? Wasn't it you who were there when we came up for Commencement—Helen and I? Bob Duncan told us about you at the time. You put the Constabulary idea into his head. You were in Princeton to receive an honorary degree!" Her tone was triumphant.

"Yes. A pamphlet I wrote about the dialects spoken in the Philippines got me a Master of Arts. And the work I put into it was worth while because it seems to have made you remember me."

A silence fell between them. In the silence, sounds peculiar to the time and place regained each its full value—from the bay, the dull thud of a paddle against the gunwale of a canoe; from a distant barrio, the plaintive note of a knife-grinder's pipe. A bird sang in a mango-tree; geckos croaked among the vines of the pergolas; a kid, following his mother as she grazed the lawn, bleated for his supper.

Crittenden sat watching Anne with an intentness she found almost disconcerting. The blood crept into her cheek when he did not avert his glance.

"Shall we go back to the field?" she suggested at last.

As they turned the end of the grandstand, the

players came into view, the Field Artillery team in full attack on the Civil Government's goal.

Bob Duncan, playing number two for the Civil Government, rode off his opponent. Flashing into the press where his "back" fought in the last ditch, he drew the ball from the turmoil of dancing ponies and whirling mallets, and drove it before him up the field. The pack stormed after him.

At that moment all save one of the Artillery team were behind him. Sitting his pony like a centaur, Bob whirled up his mallet for a stroke that should drive the willow far into the enemy's territory, when the latter's "back"—an exceptionally tall and powerful man—rode down upon him with the utmost lightness and boldness, and reaching the ball at the full limit of arm and mallet, hurled it a third of the length of the field for a goal.

At the very moment of victory, his skill had been turned to nothingness by the artilleryman's magnificent stroke. Duncan whipped off his helmet, and hurled it high in air. His clear voice rang over the field.

"Good work, old man! Good work!"

A gale of applauding laughter and hand-clapping shook the little grandstand at his generous cry.

Anne's eyes shone as she turned to Crittenden. "There it is! That verse on the sundial! You're both like that:

"Loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game—
True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shined upon."

Her enthusiasm was warming. He felt a humble pride that she should apply the spirit of the lines to him.

XIV

USURY

DICK NELSON called in Spanish to his old confidential clerk. "Gregorio!"

"Yes, Don Ricardo?"

"Are you sure no letter was left for me while I was asleep?"

"No letter, sir. I may have nodded a little minute myself, but I would have known of it. Shall I send to the post-office?"

"No. It would come by messenger—if at all. No matter."

Dick Nelson had his offices, as his father had had before him, on the Binondo side of the Pasig River, not far from the Bridge of Spain. Whatever it may have been in the older Nelson's time, it was now a comfortable place, made sun-proof by a great awning above each window, and heat-proof by a profusion of noiselessly-running electric fans.

Besides a formal desk and desk-chair, long lounging-chairs of bamboo were at hand; and a rattan divan, provided with a grass pillow and mat, offered opportunity for the most prolonged siesta.

A convenient locker in the overhanging gallery—the offices were in the second storey—always held a supply of mineral waters and good cognac. There, also, he kept potted meats, conserves, and crackers, with a proper complement of cutlery and china. Ice could always be brought in from a near-by restaurant.

Often he had his tiffin without stirring from his office, and napped afterward at leisure.

Connected with the inner office by a short passage-way was a bathroom fitted in white enamel. In hot weather, after a cooling shower, he could supply himself with fresh clothes from an assortment kept in a convenient closet.

His offices were a comfortable place, but by no means a busy one. Where, in his father's time, a score of overdriven clerks had toiled, and half as many barefoot messengers had come and gone, now only one Filipino bookkeeper, white-haired and bespectacled, handled without difficulty whatever there was to be done.

This inactivity, however, was not due to a falling-off in the fortunes of the house of Nelson, but arose from the fact that not long before his death, the elder Nelson had reduced his property to shapes that represented highly profitable investment rather than a business actually in being.

Where Henry Nelson had received the shipping reports of his inter-island agents, scanned invoices from his sugar estates in Negros, hurried off into Pangasinan Province to satisfy himself that the rice had been properly planted, stormed back to Manila to settle a strike among his cigar-makers, or to rout out half the water-front for the purpose of despatching a tug to the aid of one of his pearl-schooners wrecked on a reef in the Sulu Sea,—where the father had worked hard and lived passionately, the son now collected the dividends from the incorporated sugar and rice plantations, clipped the coupons of the bonds of the Northern, Southern, and Central Tobacco Company,

took through his brokers (Smythberg and Company, Limited) his just percentages of the exporting business Henry Nelson had built up, and attended, at times, the meetings of the board of directors of the bank whose chief assets were the sums deposited by his father after the sale of his pearlings interests.

The right-hand drawer of Dick's desk was made of steel, equipped with a burglar-proof lock. It was, in fact, a miniature safe, once employed by his father exclusively for business purposes, but now put to additional uses—to hold certain maps, notes of an un-business-like sort, and a photograph of a slender, full-busted woman whose long eyes, even from the lifeless pasteboard, regarded him enigmatically.

In the course of any given month, not a few of Dick's office-hours were spent in reading. Of this fact he made no secret. He readily admitted that there was no actual need for him to work at all, but he insisted that as a self-respecting man of property he must have a convenient place and a definite time to give such property his attention. He did not pretend that he devoted all his office-hours to business—merely that he held himself ready to "handle anything that turned up." In the intervals frankly he read. Why not?

But what he did not confess—at any rate, to Anne—was that he day-dreamed even more than he read, certainly vastly more than he worked. His feet fitted into the long arms of his lounging-chair, he would let his novel trail at his finger-ends, and fall to dreaming. Sometimes a half hour would go by while he stared into the cool shadows.

After such day-dreams he was likely to seat him-

self at his desk, open the steel drawer, look into it a moment, then snap it to with an air of decision, sometimes of irritation. The old bookkeeper used to wonder what paper it was that had been mislaid.

On an afternoon, not long after such an incident, a messenger brought Dick the note that he seemed to be expecting. Its perusal plainly gave him great satisfaction. He hastily despatched a reply, then whistling a gay tune, vanished into his dressing-room.

When he reappeared he was clad in fresh white duck, a white straw hat on his head, and an ivory cane in his fingers.

“You may close up when you wish, Gregorio. I won’t be back to-day.”

“Yes, sir.”

Dick got into his electric runabout, and put himself en route to Malate—to the house of the Smythbergs.

Paul Smythberg looked up lazily from his chair as Dick was shown into the sala. “Hello, Nelson! Glad to see you! Didn’t come to talk business this hot afternoon, I hope? Quite right; I’m glad of it. You’re just in time for tea, at any rate. I fancy you’ll find Julie out on the veranda making it now.” His heavy face bent over his book. “If you don’t mind, I’ll let her take care of you while I go on with this rubber report—Federated Malay States Plantations, you know. Dividends something unbelievable! I tell you we’ve got to go in for rubber in these islands before long, if we’re to hold our own. Ask Julie to send me in a cup of tea, if you think of it, will you?”

On the veranda, Julie Smythberg received Dick with

her enigmatic smile, and cool fingers which she allowed to linger in his an instant.

“Smythberg” was of modern Spanish construction, built without a patio, and having a wide second-storey veranda in lieu of an azotea. However, the tall trees surrounding it, and its cool situation on the bay shore, made it delightful. The breath of the China Sea, stealing in past Corregidor, twenty miles away, lifted a strand of Julie’s hair. She tucked it back with a gesture that showed a rounded wrist.

She wore an informal house gown of lavender mull rather too much belaced. Her slim lavender-stocked ankles and small lavender-slipped feet were carelessly crossed on a low hassock.

Dick fluttered an admiring hand over her as he sat down. “That colour! It’s the colour of the farthest depths of Heaven.”

“Very pretty. But—isn’t your knowledge of Heaven really rather limited?”

“Limited to this veranda, perhaps! Limited to what you’ve taught me! Limited——”

“Steady on! That’s as much as I can expect of you off-hand, you know.”

As they talked—or he talked and she listened—her hands moved steadily about the tea things, yet now and then her bosom rose with a prolonged and wavering breath. At times she exasperated Dick—he could not make up his mind whether she was an unfeeling woman who strove to show a warmth toward him she did not possess, or one who repressed by sheer will-power the emotions she genuinely felt. He did not like to believe that a woman could long be unconcerned in his presence, if he willed it otherwise.

Her eyes went slowly over him. "A—ah! you look like a real White Knight!—even the sword, or what would have been the sword five hundred years ago, wouldn't it?"

"A knight and a sword always at your service! You see, I've come in short order after I got your note. You must be a witch! Did you know I was hoping you'd give me a chance to see you to-day?"

"Witches were burned, weren't they? A doubtful compliment!"

"Now they keep others burning! A dubious happiness!"

She shrugged her shoulders with a certain deliberate languor that held his eyes to the full lines of her figure. "You've always a Roland ready for my Oliver, haven't you? It's hard to suppress you. And by the way, that reminds me—I only asked you to come so that I could give you a proper scolding."

"A scolding? From you! Why?"

"You know why, my lad."

"Oh, of course. If you mean a man's so erring by nature that he always deserves a scolding no matter what he does—no matter how nice he tries to be to someone—if it's only on general principles—"

"But you haven't any general principles, have you? Don't you make up new principles for each particular case?"

"If you're a particular case, yes. There isn't any other—Julie."

She drew one of her slow breaths. "You know I owe you a real scolding—Dick—on account of—this."

With a deft fillip of her slim forefinger she brushed

aside a handkerchief which lay on the table. A card-case sparkled in gold and ivory and heavy pearls!

He gave her his quick smile. "It's rather pretty. But what have I to do with it? Who——"

"It's no use. No one but you would send me such a—beauty. You deserve a good scolding, don't you?"

"Pshaw! That's nothing—the cardcase."

"Don't disparage my cardcase, please. You know what I mean. It's very handsome; quite too handsome. You know that."

"Does—anyone—object? Or doesn't—anyone—know?"

Her hand half-shielded her eyes as she patted her honey-coloured hair. "Anyone—is too sensible to object. But *I* may, mayn't *I*?"

"Yes, of course. But please don't—not until there's really something to object to. And there never will be anything, if you look at matters—sensibly." The tip of his fingers rested a moment on the cardcase. "What's a trifle like that! I dare say the postman will deliver you something really worth while some day—in one form or another."

For once her eyes did not meet his, but went to the mass of green leaves that screened the veranda from the bay, then came back to the tea-table. She drew her handkerchief over the cardcase with one hand, and with the other gave him a cup of tea.

"Will you come to dinner with us at the Army and Navy Club next week," she said, "you and your wife? It'll be Ladies' Night, you know—dancing after dinner, and all that."

"Thank you very much. We'll be glad to come."

She lifted her eyebrows. "But you'll have to see

what your wife says about it, won't you? This is merely a preliminary invitation to you—to show you I really want you to come."

"She won't have any engagement, I'm sure. How many dances will you give me?"

"As your hostess it won't be polite of me to limit you—unless you're quite unreasonable."

"Oh, I'll take care to make you think me that," he smiled.

She said nothing, and he went on. "Do you know, Julie, I think I'm going to be rather exigent toward you from this time on? By Jove! it's about time I should be! I've known you now, off and on, for three or four years, and yet I've never had you alone—really alone—yet."

"I've been married ever since we've known each other—and now *you* are." Perhaps the reminder was faintly satirical.

"Well, one must marry. You couldn't care for an inexperienced boy, and I couldn't care for a mere girl."

"Care for?"

"Yes—I said 'care for'! It's a word that means a little or a great deal. I won't quarrel with you about that—yet. You know what I mean—one couldn't make—make a friend of a mere girl. Four years ago, when you first came out here—when I first began to—care for you, you used to laugh at me because you said I was a mere boy. I'm not so much of a boy, now."

"But you really were one, then, weren't you? I'm not saying you weren't a very decent sort of boy."

"I was twenty-three or four—two or three years older than you!"

"A girl of twenty-one—married—is always years and years older than a man of twenty-three."

"Oh, well! I'm willing to admit I didn't have much balance, then—when I was so mad about you! I'm willing to admit that now—since you don't laugh at me any more."

"I never laughed at you, I'm sure."

"Perhaps not—not openly, at any rate. You hardly even bothered enough to listen to me in those days. Yes, I was mad about you, then. I remember I even wrote you verses about your hair and your eyes. A lot of water has run under the bridge in the four years since, but"—he leaned toward her—"Julie, the bridge is still in the same place."

"Is that a metaphor? I'm not at all sure I understand metaphors."

"I think you do this one."

Her long eyes met his. "You used to talk to me—audaciously—even four years ago, when I was a bride, didn't you?"

"Not audaciously; wildly, perhaps. Yes, by Jove! I did carry on about you in a wild way, didn't I! But I meant it. No, I didn't carry on wildly—only devotedly. You realized that even then—you knew I wasn't audacious but devoted. That's the reason you never got angry with me."

"Perhaps I ought to have been angry. But you were a mere boy. You didn't know what you were saying; you didn't really know what you felt, did you?"

"Didn't I!" He pressed his hands together, and looked at her keenly over the tips of his slim fingers.

“I tell you, Julie, I’ve never forgotten what I felt then. Yes, and I know what I feel now. I’m going to make you know, too!”

A muchacho softly approached with the word that the “Señor” was ready for his tea.

“Very well, Felix, I’ll ring for you in a moment.”

The boy withdrew, and Julie lit the little alcohol lamp under the kettle. Her eyes were fixed on the steam which began to puff from the spout.

“Paul tells me your exporting business is growing so that a Hamburg firm wants to take it over—have written you offering to send out a special manager, if you’ll transfer the brokerage to them. He says they promise you something quite extraordinary.”

“Yes, that’s true. They guarantee an increase of ten per cent. over what I’m getting now from Smythberg and Company.”

She lifted the silver lid and peered into the kettle. The escaping steam wrapped her face and hair in a delicate haze.

“That *is* extraordinary, isn’t it? I fancy you can’t afford to refuse an offer like that.”

“Oh, yes, I can. Smythberg and Company do well enough by me. I’m not *exigent*—in money matters—Julie.”

Her bosom rose slowly.

She rang for Felix, and sent in a cup of tea to her husband. As the clink of spoon against cup sounded from the sala, she gave Dick an expressionless glance.

XV

A PASSING CARRIAGE

IT was almost dark when Dick rose to go.

The lizards were croaking among the leaves of the trees that shaded the veranda. Beyond the ivory-white of the garden wall, the waters of the bay, touched by the setting sun, sent up a glint of black-red, like a rose dipped in charcoal-dust. The clouds towering above Mariveles burned in half a score of brilliant colours. From the breakwater guarding the mouth of the Pasig, to the villages of Imus and Bacoor, lights began to glimmer at the mast-heads of fishing-vessels. Julie Smythberg's long eyes shared in the mystery and softness of the night.

Dick, looking down at her, sighed in open reluctance. "I'm off—but under protest."

"No sympathy from me, you know—you're adjourning of your own motion. No one obliges you to go. Of course, if you want to hurry away—"

"Oh, I must. 'And if I must, I must, and there's an end on't'! Worse luck! I hope to live long enough in this cruel world to do just what I want—and have whatever I like."

"A modest hope of yours, isn't it?"

"Both modest and sincere. I hate to say good-night—Julie."

"You act the part of Regret splendidly."

"I don't *act*, at all—I feel. It's you who *act*."

"Now, that's not nice of you."

"I beg your pardon. But I must go just the same."

"Obstinate chap! Good-night, then."

"Good-night. Don't forget we've accepted your invitation for next week at the Army and Navy Club."

"No fear. Good-night."

He could not be certain that her hand met his any more warmly than it had in greeting him two hours before.

In spite of what he might well have considered a satisfactory talk with Julie, he felt vaguely discontented as he guided his runabout down the driveway. It was this feeling—a half apprehension that he might never be able to grasp the mystery that lay behind her level glance—that had driven him to say good-night before there had been need to do so.

In the street, mindful of traffic ordinances, he stopped to adjust the car-lamps, which were not burning well. When he looked up he was a trifle startled to find a man quietly watching him.

"Who's that? Oh! hello, there! Is that you, Gorsjiu? You ought to give up those rubber heels of yours, man—they make you walk like a ferret! You don't want to give one the creeps, do you?—or were you testing my nerves? Get in. Where would you like to go?"

"Anywhere—anywhere you choose," returned the consul, lifting his emaciated figure into the car. "My time is yours for a while. You've been calling?" He peered up at the arch of the high gateway. "Let's see—where are we? Ah! The Smythbergs?"

Dick started the car. "You may call it calling, if

you like. Smythberg and I usually talk more business than we do anything else."

"Ah!"

The consul's heavy pith helmet hid almost his entire face. Only his colourless lips, and his square, pale chin, could be seen below its shadowing brim. Now and then he drew a laboured breath—he had walked in from the Polo Club for the sake of the exercise.

"You'll have to give up your foot-racing," said Dick, thoughtlessly amused by the other's efforts to repress his panting. "No more jiu-jitsu or turnvereining for you, my boy. It's too hard on you. You ought to buy yourself a car."

"I am not a millionaire," returned Gorsjiu testily, "as someone is whom I have the pleasure to know. I do not carry an automobile in every pocket."

"Is that a stab at me? Well, it isn't my fault, you know. I'm the least self-made man you ever saw. You'll have to blame the money-making on my energetic father. I'm doing my humble best to get rid of some of that money." His voice dropped a note. "You ought to believe that—more willingly than anyone else in the world."

"Yes, yes, of course. You are right. What you have said is a reminder to me, also. I tried to get hold of you earlier this afternoon, on business of some importance. We need another thousand pesos at once, in order to—"

Dick made an impatient movement. "For Heaven's sake! Don't talk—business to me now, man! Haven't you a soul! Don't you feel this air—and see those stars up there?"

The other studied him with sudden curiosity. "I see them, certainly."

"Then try to feel them! Can't you let me float along here, enjoying life, without thrusting money down my throat?"

"I want you to thrust it out of your throat. It is really necessary to mention this now. We need a thousand pesos in order to——"

"You shall have it to-morrow. And you can go to the devil with it, if you like—only don't talk about it now!"

"Very good!"

He was silent. But after a little, Dick realized that what he had taken to be renewed pantings from Gors-jiu were really a series of repressed chuckles.

"Well," he asked good-naturedly, "what's the joke now? Something you have on me?"

The other shook again. "You said just now I could go to the devil with the money. That is precisely what I intend to do with the thousand pesos! Yes, yes—I shall take them to the devil."

"That's cool! Go to the devil with my money! Wine or women—or both?"

"No, no; I am past both of them. The devil I mean is only a man, after all—a Chino. A real devil once. He was called El Diablo by the Spaniards in the bloody days of 1896, and I have no doubt he deserved the name. But not more than two or three persons know that a certain shopkeeper that now is, was once El Diablo."

"Why wasn't he hanged long ago?"

"What white man ever proved a crime against a Chino? Sometimes one is hanged, it is true, but that

is so because at such times everyone is certain that the man is guilty—but never by proof. This tiendero is peaceful enough now because he is broken in health, but he is still useful as a messenger."

"I understand. But is it necessary to employ scum of that sort?"

"Yes. It is necessary in—the business," said the other sententiously. "No pot was ever boiled without a scum. When the soup is ready, we skim off the scum, and—" His sweeping gesture cast it into the gutter.

"Rather hard on said scum."

"It has served our purpose—we throw it away."

"Hum-m!" The last words struck Dick unpleasantly. He eyed his companion askance. "You throw it away when you've done with it."

But Gorsjiu already had perceived his blunder and, acutely aware of the character of the man beside him, was quite prepared to retrieve the harm done.

"The world cares nothing for a peasant," he said with apparent unconcern of Dick's watchful eyes. "It never has, and it never will, until the millenium has come. I have spent three years in Germany, two in England, one in your America, and here in the Philippines—how long? Wherever I have been—in the Philippines, in Europe, even in your so-called free America, I have seen that there are millions of serfs. Call them what you will—let them call themselves what they may choose—they are serfs the same always, not to be reckoned with no matter what may happen. The good things of the world are always for those who can take them. Was it not one of the English poets who said it?"

“‘The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.’

“That is a saying worthy of an Ito or a Bismarck. And those ‘who can’ are the rich, of course. It is the rich who are powerful nowadays. There is nothing they cannot take—nothing they cannot do.”

His voice was thick with earnestness. His head was a little thrown back—the end of his beaklike nose showed sharp and strong under the brim of his helmet. “If I were rich, I would be Dictator of the Philippines Republic in five years—no, in one!” He checked himself abruptly. His narrow shoulders fell into an apologetic slouch against the back of the seat. “Ah! I show you my envy too plainly. I forgot that you yourself are a millionaire.”

Dick’s eyes were alight. “You’re right!” he said. “You’re right! I have money, but I want power—real power! I want people to stand clear of me for some other reason than because I’m rich. I’m tired of knowing that they feel my money—I want to make them feel *me!*”

“They shall. With your means—and your abilities—you shall do much—very much. Yes, yes! A dictatorship of the Philippines, with the rank of marquis, or even prince, of the most ancient Empire in the world, that is better even than being a capitalist!”

The car was now rolling smoothly up Bagumbayan. Dick laid aside his hat, and sat gracefully, the wind rushing against his smooth black hair, and ruffling it ever so little. His white teeth shone between his slightly parted lips.

The runabout passed under a street-lamp—a Fili-

pina standing in the glow looked up at him in frank admiration. He began to hum softly to himself, forgetful of his emotion of a moment before.

Gorsjiu sighed. He himself would have liked to be admired by pretty women, but his health was bad; also, he was older than his companion by fifteen years. Above all, he had to concentrate his energies on the handling of great affairs, affairs which meant for him power, money, fame, rank, his country's gratitude—if he succeeded; if he failed—disgrace, ruin, oblivion, possibly death. He smothered a cough—Death was not many years away from him in either event. No, he could not think of women. He wished that Nelson would not!

“We'll go through Intramuros and down the Malecon,” said Dick.

“And drop me at the University Club, if you please.”

“All right.”

On the Malecon Drive, another pretty woman—an American in a passing victoria—roused herself from a musing attitude, and looked up under Dick's scrutiny. She started, bowed, stretched out her hand as if to signal her cochero to stop. Then seeing that although Dick had leaned forward in a profound bow, the speed of his runabout did not slacken, she sank back in her seat.

To Gorsjiu there was something singularly forlorn about her motion, and something remarkable in the fact that a lovely girl should drive alone in man-crowded Manila. He was about to make frank comment, when a glance at Dick's face impelled him to give an ironical twist to his words.

"That was the loveliest woman I have yet seen in the Philippines—yes, one of the loveliest I have seen anywhere. After all, no women can compare with your American women—in charm and in beauty. They are so handsome because they are so well treated by the American men. That is the secret of it. What eyes she had—the woman who passed us! I could see them shine even in the dark. She seemed to know you. May I ask——"

"That was my wife."

"A—ah! Your wife!"

He turned frankly, and stared back as if he hoped to catch another glimpse of the charming vision, notwithstanding the distance and the darkness.

"You did not recognize her in time to stop? A pity! I would have been glad to surrender my place beside you to her. Yes, a pity. Surely she thought you recognized her—she signaled her cochero."

"She prefers to drive alone at this time."

"You *do*? Your American ways are strange to me after all. With a lovely companion such as she——"

"I say *she* prefers it!"

"Ah!"

Gersjiu dared push in the probe no further—except, indeed, by turning again for another prolonged stare.

XVI

GARRYOWEN

“BUENAS NOCHES, Major Crittenden! Can you spare me a moment?”

“Even two to you, amigo.”

“You are very good. But I see you have not yet put down your cap and stick. Have you only just come?”

“I have been on duty all day.”

“And half the night clearly. By this time twenty lovely ladies are waiting for you without doubt—and shall I be permitted to rob them for a moment of so splendid a cavalier! Or do you not intend to dance to-night?”

“With Señora Rumong, perhaps, if she'll favour me. She's here to-night, I hope.”

“Yes, yes. She would never forgive me for keeping you from her, if she should know of it—but she shall not. Shall we sit on the veranda—of the tap-room? There may be an unoccupied table there, certainly there will be a cool breeze.”

The bi-weekly Ladies' Night had brought the usual throng of merrymakers to crowd the dancing-floors and promenades of the Army and Navy Club. Rumong and Crittenden managed to find a quiet corner on the men's side of the building, where the wind from the nearby bay rustled the potted palms, and the moonlight wrought phantom shapes on the lawn.

A Chinese boy, in blue tunic and white trousers,

hurried up at the soft clapping of Don Bertran's hands, served drinks, and stole away.

The two men sat sipping leisurely. The water lapped the sea-wall almost at their feet. In the tap-room behind them sounded the voices and laughter of a group of officers reviving incidents of their campaigns. At the other wing of the building a regimental band began to play.

Rumong jerked a hand in that direction. "They are dancing. If a restless soul would only exhaust its restlessness in dancing, much trouble would be saved in this world—and much punishment in the next, perhaps. But there are men who can only be cured of dangerous restlessness by stone walls."

Crittenden nodded. He knew that the other was not speaking without meaning nor for the sake of airing a random philosophy. Don Bertran went on:

"There is a saying among the Spaniards: 'Riches change even thistledown into rock.' That seems to be true usually, Major Crittenden, yet ambition—ambition without discretion—may do the very opposite, may make thistledown even of riches. Your American and English proverb describes what I mean: 'Vaulting ambition overleaps itself'! That's it—exactly. Even the most powerful mind the world ever saw—Napoleon's, I mean—his sanity was crippled by mad ambition. Then why not another's, one who is by no means a Napoleon?"

The Filipino eyed him expectantly over the rim of his glass but Crittenden was still wholly at a loss. He could only nod again.

Rumong pushed the emptied glass away. In the moonlight, his plump face looked almost sleepy, but

the eyes behind the cheekbones were very bright. He waved his hand toward the bay and the lights that glimmered along the Ermita shore.

"All this—this country—it is *my* country! When I have been away from it, in Madrid, in Paris, in New York, I have dreamed of it. I have longed for the palms and the green rice-fields as you must often long for your elm-trees and your miles of wheat. Ah, well, this is but commonplace, for every man loves his own country! You know my sincere beliefs, Major Crittenden—I have never attempted to hide them. I believe this is the country of the Filipinos and the Filipinos only, in the eyes of the God of Justice—if there is one."

"I have the greatest respect for your beliefs, Don Bertran. Government has, also—you know that. But I know you are not the man to forget that the God of Justice is the God of Time as well."

"Yes, yes! That is precisely the point I was coming to. I have not forgotten it. We must wait, wait patiently, and perhaps very long. Whoever forgets that is a fool, or a madman, or worse! Time is necessary—necessary." He struck the table a soft blow. "I love my country, and therefore I cannot tamely sit by and allow madmen—madmen or worse!—to make it run in blood again!"

"A—ah!" said Crittenden slowly.

"The past is the past, Major Crittenden. Once, as you know, I fought hard against the Americans. I fought with all the strength and mind I had. There was little went on without my knowledge in those unhappy days. You understand me?—there was no

brotherhood, no society, no secret league to which I did not belong."

"I understand. But Government knows that you are no longer concerned with such things."

"It is true. It is all long past now, but I know what I know. I can never forget the words and symbols I once made use of too often. Of late, by accident, I have noticed certain things; I have heard rumours. Well, then—" He glanced swiftly about, then leaned far across the table. "Persons whom you know well are—" He made a rapid and peculiar gesture.

"Are you sure?" Crittenden's exclamation was half inarticulate.

"Yes—too sure."

He leaned forward still farther. One standing within a foot of the table hardly could have caught the sound of the names he muttered in the other's ear.

He sat back, and for a moment Crittenden stared at him. When the latter spoke there was a horror in his voice Rumong did not fully understand.

"I've been afraid—afraid it might come to this!"

He was silent, then went on as if he felt the Filipino's confidence worthy of a return.

"You've done the Government a great service. We've known for months that there was a skeleton of a Filipino army in existence—on paper, at least. We've known rifles were being sent into Formosa, from Vienna via Shanghai—rifle-cases marked 'agricultural implements.' We knew the money for the arms came to Vienna from Paris—yes, and what bank forwarded the drafts. Our naval attaché at Paris found that out. But at that point we met obstacles—we could only

guess who put the money in the hands of the Paris bankers. Before, we were only able to guess at the truth, but now we know—thanks to you."

"I have not told you that. I do not know myself. I know only what I have said—the names of persons who belong to the Katipunan—persons who have no business in it."

"But what you have said makes me certain that our guess as to who has furnished the money is correct. As for the other—the consul—hum-m!"

Rumong eyed him with frank curiosity.

"It isn't easy, Don Bertran. The Government at home—Washington—wouldn't thank us if we stirred up trouble, if we accused a representative of Japan of aiding treason, unless we had the clearest proofs. No—we must go slow." Again he fell silent.

As they sat staring at each other, the regimental band struck up a stirring quickstep. Instantly deep voices in the taproom behind them began to call out: "Garryowen! Garryowen!"

Then all through the building—from hallways, verandas, and rotunda, even from the dancing-room—went up wild cries, cries menacing, exulting, the maddening battle-cry of American cavalry as it charges home.

A full minute the thrilling clamour rang far. Then music and uproar died together, save for an occasional wild yell like that of a solitary trooper careering over the field, frenzied with battle-lust, unheeding the trumpeted signal of recall. Then, except for the whisper of the frightened palms, profound silence fell.

Rumong let go a long breath. "I heard that last at the Zapote River, as your soldiers charged our line, at the instant I myself was struck down. Ah, you

Americans!" he went on in a sort of humorous despair. "You never grow up, and yet you are never very young. You are shrewd old men and great reckless boys at the same time."

"That's true. That spirit helps us to go far, but it makes us wonder if the journey's worth while."

Without replying, Rumong touched his arm, and nodded significantly.

Cautiously turning his head, Crittenden saw a woman—Anne Nelson—emerge from the glare of the rotunda, and draw a chair to the edge of the middle veranda. A high screen of lauan wood effectually hid her from the promenaders within, but as she sat facing the velvet blackness above the bay—unseen and alone as doubtless she fancied—she was distinctly visible to the two men from their table at the darkened corner of the north wing. The moonlight caressed the heavy rope of pearls about her neck.

She leaned her elbows on the railing and her chin on the backs of her clasped fingers, and stared straight before her. The look in her eyes, the expression of her face—wan under the moon—the droop of her whole body, had in it something hopelessly sad—regret, longing, even resignation. It was clear that she had withdrawn to that secluded spot in order to be alone with melancholy thoughts.

Impelled by the same chivalrous feeling, the American and the Tagalog rose together. Aided by the darkness, they left their table without being seen by Anne.

Neither spoke until they were passing down the hall, and Señora Rumong could be seen smiling at them across the ballroom. Don Bertran put a hand on his companion's arm.

"If that unhappy girl had but had the good fortune to meet—a different man—in time!"

There was that in Rumong's voice which shook Crittenden through and through, revealing to him in one vivid flash the meaning of his own thoughts and feelings, even of actions, whose significance he had not before understood. He divined at last that almost from his first sight of her his interest in Anne Nelson had been based upon more than pity.

Almost from the first, all unconsciously, there was that in her which had gripped him with a power beyond himself, had driven him on with a force he had not thought of resisting. He had not fought against it—he had only lately begun to fear it—because he had not understood it. Now he knew! He saw Anne Nelson in her beauty, her sweetness, her loyalty to the man who had already half-forgotten her, and he knew at last that he loved her.

There could be no blame to her that this was so. God forbid! It was not even fault of his own. He might struggle against his love for her—love not new-born but new-discovered!—he might struggle against it but never conquer. Well, he would fight to the last as became his honour and her own!

"A different man—in time," said Rumong again. Crittenden's eyes looked straight before him. "Perhaps she's not unhappy."

"I think so. Yes, I am sure of it—if I know anything of women." His hand fell from the other's arm. "Come! Dance once with Donna Dolores—then go, and find *her*. She ought not be allowed to think too much—alone."

XVII

THE BLACK HAG

It was true that Anne had sought her lonely chair in order to think undisturbed; to weigh the values of certain jarring elements which had come into her life. A flash of remembrance—a chance word flung at her by Dick earlier that night, a word careless rather than cutting—had come to her in the very middle of a dance, and illumined the events of the past few weeks as lightning reveals a murky landscape.

She had reached a stage of her married life where she was forced to realize, however reluctantly, that her husband's love for her was a thing very different from what it had once been.

Anne was not a child, nor was she morbidly sensitive. She had not expected the first passion of a bridegroom for his bride—of the lover for his mistress—to endure forever. She had perfectly understood that passion must give way to another sort of love—a sort, as she had hoped, even more tender, even more productive of mutual happiness. She had looked for a change in the nature of her husband's love, but a change only from fervour to pure affection, from the ardour of passion to the glory of steadfast kindness.

Now, it seemed to her that the former had passed away, and yet the latter was not drawing near. Instead, even if she and Dick had not quite arrived at a drear desert of indifference—and she was not sure they had not—at least they were groping on its very

edge. She fought against the thought, but it remained at grips with her.

Where was the fault, and whose?

Had she herself changed in these few months? Bravely she confessed that she could not regard her husband through the same glamorous haze that once she had. But in justice to herself she admitted, also, that if she had changed, the reasons for the change lay largely with Dick himself.

Not so long since, she had vowed that a "period of adjustment" should never come to them. Now, not only had it come, but it promised never to pass. The little gracious things that make life great were lacking in their daily communion.

Dick apparently grew more and more absorbed in his affairs, suddenly grown multifarious, and mysterious to her; in his associates, some of them unknown to her; and—Anne came to the point with a mental rush—in the wife of one of those associates. It sickened her that she should be forced to consider the point at all, but she would no longer weakly put it aside.

Julie Smythberg's slim waist and full bosom, the expressionless glance of her pale-blue eyes, the fluffy cloud of her almost colorless hair—could these really be the causes of Dick's growing neglect for his wife? He had always liked blonde beauty—perhaps, beside Julie Smythberg's extreme fairness, her own bright hair and gray eyes seemed dark to his vision!

A woman admits with bitter reluctance that her power to hold her husband is on the wane. To her inevitably such an admission is an acknowledgment that her personal charm is actually fading. Yet so

much she will confess, if she must, for there is hope to repair or conceal the physical ravages of time. But the sadder truth that the known, however lovely, is to many a man less desirable than the mystery at which he can only guess, must be denied to the last—for to confess this is to confess that a remedy is impossible.

Anne dared not let herself believe, therefore, that behind the attractions of Julie Smythberg were causes lying deep in Dick's very nature. It was not because he was inconstant, not even because he was shallow, that he was failing her in faith! At the worst, was it not merely because he had a haziness of mind that made him see life in false proportions? Surely, then, there must be a remedy for this!

So Anne, trying to understand the truth, yet shrinking from the brink of understanding, succeeded only in enwrapping herself in a haze as great as any that Dick moved in.

She was still lost in thought, when she heard a voice humming softly behind her:

"I can see the place in dreams,
When the moon shines on the bay;
Liquid fire the water gleams,
Phosphorescent flames at play——"

She put out a welcoming hand. "Oh! Is it really you?"

"Really I. May I dare to hope you were thinking of me?"

"Well—no. But I do sometimes."

"Sometimes! Not often? Please!"

"You can't expect me to confess to 'often.'"

"The word 'confess' implies that there's some-

thing to confess. Therefore, you think of me often. That's a fair assumption."

"Presumption is the true word!"

"O—oh!" he groaned. "Well, if you won't confess, I will." His tone was light, but she was conscious of the latent weight of it. "I think of *you* more or less continually."

"Alas! What a poor blarneyer you are! You confess you think of me only 'more or less'!"

"Well, then, 'always,' and 'fervently,' and 'devotedly.'"

"Hum-m! Grammarians warn us to beware of the unnecessary use of adverbs, you know."

"Yes. But these are necessary to vindicate myself. Besides, the grammarians haven't any control over the military—at any rate, in time of war."

"But there's no war—no war between you and me, surely."

"Never! But there's a certain maxim: 'All's fair in—'"

"I'm sure you'd never be unfair, Major Crittenden."

The barrier of his name came none too soon. He could feel the dryness of his throat, and was aware that his eyes were holding hers too earnestly. His gaze had brought the colour to her cheeks.

"Won't you sit down?" she suggested as if in atonement for the check she had given him.

He drew a chair beside hers. "Thank you, yes. I came to ask if you won't spare me a dance—a waltz, if I'm not too late."

"Yes, of course I will. But I'd like to sit here a

little while longer, if you don't mind. It's so lovely here—so soothing."

"I think so, too—if you'll let me stay."

"Of course."

"I'm not in the way of your thoughts?"

"My thoughts? Oh, no." She gave him a little smile, droll yet pathetic. "You're in the way of my bad thoughts, yes. You're a refuge from them."

He waited expectantly, but she did not continue.

"Well, you're a refuge from mine," he said, "from my thoughts when I get lonesome. I do sometimes."

"You lonesome! Really?"

"Do you think that's so wonderful? Perhaps you haven't noticed her, but more than once when I've dropped in at 'Navarre' the Black Hag has been astride my shoulders."

"Last week I did notice—I wondered! I thought the people bored you. You sat for half an hour and never spoke once. And you drank at least three cups of tea! But why should *you* have even a nodding acquaintance with *Madame La Dame Noire?*"

"Why, indeed! For my sins, I suppose—particularly for the sin of presumption. You mentioned it a while ago."

"Presumption?"

"It's one of the Seven Deadly Sins, isn't it? If it isn't, you'll agree it ought to be."

"I agree!" She studied his face, half quizzical, half serious, in the moonlight. "Are you laying traps for me? Please, Sir Quarrelsome, have *I* done anything?"

His lips smiled, although his eyes held a shadow of earnestness. "Well, the other day, when I got up a

riding-party expressly to show you the ruins of the old monastery at Guadaloupe, you wouldn't go."

"I *couldn't* go; Dick didn't get home from—the office in time."

"A week ago, I asked you to dinner here, to-night. I meant to have a very nice crowd to meet the very nice Nelsons. I asked you what time would suit you, and you chose to-night. Yet I'd hardly reached home that day when you sent a note of regret. I believe you accepted another dinner invitation afterward."

The blood crept into her cheek. "I know; you've been treated rather badly. I'm sorry. But I found Dick had already accepted an invitation from—the Smythbergs. It—couldn't be changed. I tried—to arrange it." The blood mounted higher in her shamed cheek. "I tried, but I couldn't. And so please don't quarrel with me."

His eyes deepened as they sought hers. "Heaven forbid! I don't want to worry you. I only wondered—"

"I didn't have a chance before—to tell you about it. I knew that note was—unsatisfactory."

"It's all right now," he declared. "I was only afraid you might be vexed with me about something or other. Hurrah!" He motioned as if to toss an imaginary cap in air.

"You're just a great big boy," she smiled. "I see through you in spite of your playing Old Sober-sides so much."

"Isn't that strange, your saying that? Bertran Rumong was remarking a while ago that he thought

all Americans remained boys all their lives—a combination of shrewd old man and reckless youth."

"I can see what he means. He's a good sort, Señor Rumong, isn't he? Reliable, I mean?"

"Yes, thoroughly, I think. When there are more Filipinos like him, we can safely leave the Islands to themselves."

"I wish we saw more of the Rumongs," she said.

Her wistful tone told him that her real wish was that Dick might feel the influence of the Rumongs more and that of the Smythbergs less. If she could know the subject of his recent talk with Don Bertran, her wish might well become a prayer.

Since her arrival in the Islands, her face had lost something of its rose tints; or was it merely his fancy that this was so? Its clear pallour expressed to him the purity of a soul a little faint from ceaseless struggle. Her manner was composed although not grave; yet her eyes when lifted to his seemed pitiful rather than inscrutable. Her pitifulness—the lovely curves where her chin yielded to her throat—the spirit and the flesh of her—shook him like a hand.

"Did you join in the war-whoop a while ago?" she was asking.

"'Garryowen'? No, I happened to be talking to Rumong at that time. But that cheer has particular associations for my family—my mother's oldest brother was in the Cavalry, and was killed with Custer at the Little Big Horn."

"Isn't it splendid to have traditions like that! My family, the Churchills, fought in the Civil War and in the Revolution—and so did my husband's family, of course, the Nelson side. His mother's family must

have done some brave things, I suppose—here and in Europe, and in South America, perhaps. The Spaniards were always fighting everywhere, weren't they? But I haven't yet heard Dick talk about what his mother's people did. I must find out if there wasn't a Tonco with Cortez or Pizarro, or with—Don John of Austria; or perhaps with Legaspi, the conquistador, out here!"

"A Tonco?"

"Dick's mother was a Tonco—of Seville, I think. I must get him to tell me about the family heroes, and to look up their coat-of-arms."

Behind the screen at their backs rose the voices and laughter of promenaders. Down the hall the music sounded for the dancers—wildly in a two-step, dreamily in a waltz.

"I haven't put my name down yet," he said, breaking his own long silence. "May I have your dance-card?"

She surrendered it, and he wrinkled his brows in an effort to decipher the hieroglyphics defacing it.

"It's full—if these turkey-tracks mean anything," he complained. "You must have cut half a dozen dances by sitting out here. By Jove! there are at least six angry men in the world!"

She shrugged her shoulders. "They could have found me, if they'd cared about it."

"I've got you pretty well hidden. Let 'em go hang!" He scanned the card again. "No, there isn't a single one not taken, and I hate a split dance. This is an intolerable condition of affairs. The Gordian knot must be cut. Here goes!" He dashed his pencil through a name, and wrote in his own.

She peered over his elbow. "Why! that's Bob Duncan you've marked off!"

"So it is. That was an accident, of course, but we'll let it go. He ought to learn to write! And the idea of Bob's having the audacity to stand in the way of his commanding officer! He's lucky if I don't court-martial him for daring to ask you at all."

"Didn't I say you were just a boy?" she laughed. "Well, to tell the truth, Bob's probably forgotten all about me long ago. He's been keeping Helen March against all comers—especially against John Holbrook—half the night."

"Good for him!"

"And for her, too, I think—if she'd only see it."

"Doesn't she? Or won't she in good time?"

"I hope so—I think so. But girls—even women—like to be—well, a little cruel at times." She shivered a little. "It's getting rather cold. Shall we go inside?"

"It must be nearly time for our waltz," he conceded.

XVIII.

REVELATION

As they emerged from the shadows of the veranda, Julie Smythberg stood lazily swaying her fan as she half-leaned against the back of the lounging-bench in the rotunda. Her expressionless glance was at once fixed upon them. One might almost have fancied that she had been expectant of their appearance.

"Oh, how d'ye do?" she said. "You two have been keeping yourselves to yourselves in a cool spot, haven't you? Quite right, too. It *is* frightfully hot."

It seemed to Crittenden that Julie's complexion had even a trifle more of artificiality than usual. Her fan slipped from her hand to the limit of its supporting chain and she recovered it with the only movement of nervousness he had ever observed in her.

"Are you abandoned to a cruel fate here?" he asked perfunctorily.

"Only for a moment or two, thanks, I hope. Mr.—ah—Burton, I think it is, is off for a glass of punch for me. I'm sure I hope he won't be long about it—I'm in need of something cooling and sustaining. He's a rum chap, don't you think, Mrs. Nelson?"

"Rum isn't an American word, you know. Mr. Burton? What does 'rum' mean in his case?"

"Mean? I thought everybody knew what 'rum' meant! I mean he's a bit odd—a queer fish—not quite our sort, you see?" She shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, of course, my husband has a lot of business with him—I fancy I've heard him say so—but I've never

met him before to-night. Of course, one is obliged to know all sorts in business, now isn't one?"

"Burton's a very good sort," said Crittenden amused. "A first-rate sort, in fact. He's one of the kind that's building the foundation on which everything rests in these Islands—the industrial foundation. Without business—without good business men, and Burton's one—where would any of us be?"

She smiled at him. "Oh, of course, I'm bound to agree with you there. I've no doubt he's a good business man, and I dare say he's even honest. But what I mean is that so few Americans—American business men, that is—Well, of course, you Americans don't admit you have social distinctions, do you? But take your husband, Mrs. Nelson. He'd call himself a sort of business man, wouldn't he?—yet he's quite different from Mr. Burton."

Whether her laying hold of Nelson for purposes of comparison was a piece of impudent daring or was inspired by sheer nervousness, Crittenden could not guess. At any rate, it was in wretchedly bad taste.

The situation was not awkward—it was not even tense. There was no possibility of the two women's engaging in even the most subtle oral encounter, yet Crittenden was aware that a frosty spirit stood between Anne and Julie.

One might have supposed that, conscious of a secret antagonism, they would not have desired to keep up a conversation. Nevertheless, they continued to talk smoothly, even to smile amiably, perhaps with the resolution of opposing generals neither of whom will yield the field to the enemy.

"Aren't you dancing to-night?" asked Anne.

"Oh, yes—now and then." She inspected her card with an air of indifference. "I've gotten to such a ripe old age that I'm a bit of a wall-flower, you know. That's one of the hardships of being married, isn't it? Besides, one doesn't care to dance with everyone—even in Manila."

Crittenden made no effort to hide his amusement at this fling. "Come, now, Mrs. Smythberg, let poor Manila off easily. It means well, I'm sure. Besides it's very young, you know—young as to its American age. Was that 'even in Manila' a rose or a thorn?"

"I don't know, really—whichever you like." She fingered her dance-card again, and gave him a slow smile, faintly audacious. "My poor card! I think it isn't full—quite."

"If only I weren't going home after the next dance, I'd demand proof of that."

"How mean of you!" she exclaimed frankly. "Home? Where *do* you live, Major Crittenden?" She glanced at Anne. "One never knows about a bachelor, does one? At any rate, one's not supposed to know."

"Who cares where the wretch lives!" he laughed. "Let him languish in a mess in Ermita! Let him pine at a club on the Luneta! Or even if he roasts on top of the wall at Santa Lucia Barracks, it only serves him right!"

"Oh, you live in Santa Lucia! Aren't you comfortable there?"

"As comfortable as I deserve to be, no doubt."

"We always have plenty of Scotch and soda and ice at 'Smythberg.' And I've learned how to mix a cocktail."

“Thank you very much.”

She turned as a footstep sounded behind them.
“Oh! Here’s Mr.—ah—Burton, at last, with my glass of punch.”

Burton was a man of thirty-eight or forty years, red-faced and brown-haired. He was erect and square-shouldered, but his waist had lost the slimness it had had when he came as a volunteer soldier to the Philippines years before. Nevertheless, on Occupation Day and other gala days, in the never-finished ball-games of the Beneficiary Society to which he belonged, he still ran bases with a dash and light-heartedness that bade defiance to kilograms. Friendly brown eyes aided a kindly smile to give his face a humorous expression. About the whole man was an air of good-fellowship yet of self-reliance, shrewdness, and resourcefulness.

“Well, here I am!” he exclaimed. “I always carry a punch in my right hand, you see. This glass is right out of cold storage, Mrs. Smythberg. There you are! Mrs. Nelson, can’t I get you something cooling, too? There’s lemonade, if you’d rather have it.”

Anne declined, and Burton, when Julie had drained her glass, put it carelessly on the back of the great wooden bench of the rotunda. Straightway he fell to political talk with Crittenden, who in vain endeavoured to evade him.

“You see, Major, if all this independence talk . . . proper guarantees . . . protection of the business community . . . Yes, but I’ve been looking for a chance to ask you . . . Now, it looks to me this way . . . But suppose the United States says . . . May be ten million dollars gold

would cover all legitimate claims if we go out tomorrow, but . . . ”

Julie tapped her knuckles impatiently with her fan. Then, shrugging her shoulders in resignation, she turned to Anne.

“ He’s supposed to be dancing with me, you know—Mr. Burton.”

“ Why don’t you remind him? ”

“ Oh, it’s not worth bothering about. I only let him put his name down because he dances so beautifully. One wouldn’t think a man like that could—but he does, really.”

“ A heavy man often dances well.”

“ I fancy he had plenty of practice with the native girls—in the days of your ‘First Empire’ here.”

“ Why not? If a man was stationed in the provinces in those days, or even here, there were no American or English girls to dance with.”

“ Hum-m! ” Her pale eyes went deliberately over the two men. “ I suppose Major Crittenden—must have had all sorts of adventures.”

“ I suppose so.”

“ Don’t you think he’s extraordinarily handsome? ”

“ He’s distinguished looking, at any rate.”

“ Downright handsome, I’d call it. Paul was saying the other day that he’s the brains of Government out here. I like men—men of that sort, I mean. But Major Crittenden has no use for me—none at all.”

“ What makes you think so? ”

“ I’m sure of it. He thinks I’m silly. And perhaps I am—he may be right about it. You’re lucky, Mrs. Nelson.”

“ Lucky? ”

"Yes. I'm sure he doesn't think you're silly. You see more or less of him, don't you?"

"Why—yes. He calls on my 'day' sometimes."

"Quite right. He's never called on me but once—when I first came to Manila three or four years ago. You heard how he thanked me—'very much'—just now when I tried to bribe him with a cocktail and all that. I know when I'm jolly well snubbed! I do, indeed. But it was only what I half expected." She whirled her fan at the end of its chain. "He's the right sort; keep him near you as long as you can—I would. I've never had a man of that sort for a friend, and yet I try to be nice to men—men of that sort. He's a real power here."

"Is he?"

"Everyone says so. You know him rather well—don't you *feel* he is?"

"Yes. I think I do."

"Of course; one is bound to feel a man like him. I say you're lucky."

Anne wondered what was Julie's motive in letting her talk cling so persistently about the character of Crittenden. She felt that Julie was by no means so silly as she pretended to be. She half suspected that so far from being silly she was very subtle. The suspicion kept her on her guard.

Julie glanced over her shoulder. "Do you suppose that man intends to leave me bolt upright here all night!" She tapped the sinning Burton's elbow smartly. "I say, Mr.—Burton! If you're quite ready—"

He wheeled, laughing apologetically. "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Smythberg, I'm sure. I forgot I was

here for fun. I always get lost when I get a shot at Major Crittenden. I beg your pardon. Shall I take you back?"

"Yes. Come along. But you've lost your dance, you know, I've this next one with——"

Her voice became inaudible as she and her companion joined the throng moving toward the dance-room. On the point of passing from sight, Burton, his chin on his shoulder, twisted his mouth a little ruefully. It was clear that the merchant had his own view of Julie Smythberg.

Anne exchanged a smile of understanding with Crittenden, then she, too, moved forward. As she did so her gown brushed the empty glass carelessly left on the board back of the lounging-bench, knocking it off. Crittenden caught it with a quick motion.

"O—oh!" cried Anne. "Oh, good! That was clever of you!"

She had flung out her hand involuntarily, and by some chance had struck the rope of pearls that ringed her neck. It slid smoothly off into her fingers.

"Now how did I manage to do that! I'm very awkward to-night."

He drew her back to the quiet veranda, put down the glass, and turned to find her trying to reclasp the necklace.

"May I fix it for you?"

"If you will. I never can do this without help."

He stood behind her, and drew the pearls about her round white throat. As he did so, his fingers were forced to touch her gently. They were burning hot!

A thrill went through her. The fire she had half felt underlying his words during their talk behind the

screen, was now leaping from his fingers into her body. Unwittingly he was revealing his very soul to her.

"Is it all right now?" To her own ears her voice sounded infinitely far away.

"I—I think so."

Again she could feel the scorching touch of his fingers as they left the clasp.

"The music's beginning," she said. "I think it's our dance."

They reentered the hall, and threaded their way among the groups of people, to the ballroom.

The place was a mass of moving colour. Girls gowned in white, in pink, in apricot, in blue, swayed brilliant as birds-of-paradise. The uniforms of their partners shone almost as bright—on their collars the crossed cannon of the Artillery, the rifles of the Infantry, the sabres of the Cavalry, the silver anchors of the Navy, the globes of the Marines, the towers-and-dolphins of the Constabulary. As numerous as the officers were the civilians, Americans, Europeans, Filipinos, the two former in white, the latter conspicuous in black, reminiscent of Paris.

The orchestra was throbbing out a languorous waltz. Crittenden slipped his arm about Anne's shoulders, and in perfect time, they drifted across the floor.

They had waltzed together once before—at the Governor-General's reception at Malacañan. But that was when their acquaintance had hardly begun. How long ago that was! Even at that time he had been thrilled with the joy of having her so near him, but to her he had been little more than an attractive

stranger. Now they were friends, each conscious of a deep interest in the other, each aware that the other felt that interest.

He danced lightly. The revelation of himself that had come to him earlier that night burned in him as he moved. Her body within the circle of his arm seemed to him astonishingly slight, infinitely soft. The music, the motion, his thoughts, intoxicated him, try as he might to steady himself.

Glancing over his shoulder, Anne saw Julie Smythberg glide by in Dick's arms. Dick's face looked strangely dazed. He was gazing down into Julie's eyes which, long and heavy-lidded, were lifted to his.

Anne felt a desperate tightening of her heart! A moment more, and it began to beat wildly again. She had realized that she did not dare to lift her eyes to Crittenden's.

XIX

UNCERTAIN MUSIC

TORRENTIAL rains had come and gone, and now the monsoon blew pleasantly cool. Thick clouds advanced from the heights of Mariveles, and spread over the city, shielding it from the sun. The days were a delight. At night one could not be comfortable without a light blanket.

The island-world grew a shade more green. The golden fruits of the mango and papaya, seen amid the glancing green, shone like veritable apples of Hesperides. Clusters of feather bamboo, looked down upon from a slope in the moonlight, lay like pools of silver water. Trailing vines were cascades that fell without sound.

In the country about Manila, peasant girls returning from the well bearing joints of bamboo filled with water, exchanged jokes and laughter, and walked more jauntily as each day passed. In the air was talk of *baile*, of carnival, of *fiesta*. In the churches, acolytes began to furbish the trappings of the images of the Virgin, of the Christ Child, of the Twelve Apostles—ready to bear them in procession on saints' days. Seasons came and went.

With the changing seasons had come changes in the life of Anne and Dick Nelson, or rather changes already begun had grown more marked. The haze between husband and wife steadily thickened, yet so quietly, so without overt act on the part of either, that at times Anne would give herself an actual shake as

if she might thus dispel the mental cloud that seemed to envelop her.

She was unhappy, and there was no one of whom she could ask advice or help. Her mother and father were in far away South Carolina. Helen March was only an inexperienced girl. Mrs. Easton, with all her kindness of nature, would not have understood matters so vague that they could hardly be put into words. Above all, Anne was far too proud deliberately to reveal to anyone her anxiety over the perplexities that beset her.

But there was one person upon whose strength and unspoken sympathy she found herself counting more and more. The thought of Alan Crittenden's kind eyes, and of the expression of his face, firm, keen, faintly quizzical, brought her a sense of comfort that puzzled and even frightened her a little.

No word concerning Dick ever passed between them, but she felt that Crittenden was aware of her unhappiness and even guessed its cause. She knew that his power of divining her thoughts arose from the sympathy that had existed between them almost from the first moment of their acquaintance. What frightened her was the thought that his friendship for her seemed to have become something more, something infinitely deeper and stronger.

The changes that went on in the minds and hearts of the Nelsons were in no way visible to the world. Life must be lived without flinching—so one soft night there was a dinner at "Navarre," to which had been invited at least one guest against whose name—suggested by Dick—Anne had been too proud to protest.

When she received Julie Smythberg's cold little

hand in hers that night, even Dick's quietly watchful eyes could detect no diminution in the usual cordiality of her smile and the graciousness of her welcoming words.

Anne went into dinner on Crittenden's arm.

"I'm treated far beyond my deserts," he said, "in having you to take in."

"Don't think this is any special honour for you," she smiled. "Dick and I gave up trying to assort people to-night. We just shuffled the names and I drew you."

"Fate!" he said quietly. "We can't resist—Fate."

They sat down, and immediately the murmur of voices arose all about them. But she was silent, finding herself strangely at a loss.

The wind from the punkah fluttered the women's hair, but the flames of the candles did not stir, protected as they were by their punkah-tops—little, wind-mill-like covers that whirled with and neutralized the breeze. The dining-room was paneled in tindalo wood wherein the eye found fathomless depths, darkly red. In a gallery at one side, lanterns glowed against the darkness. The table was heaped with golden cosmos—from its splendour the yellow candle-shades took an additional richness of hue.

The shell-windows had been drawn back to their fullest extent—the whole side of the room gave a welcome to the night. In the star-shot darkness without voices called afar off; a dog barked from a distant barrio; from the next street a guitar sounded, deep with pain, and pleading for the balm of love returned.

The pleasant scent of wood smoke crept in with the noises of the night—cooking fires of the natives

were still alight in the alleys between the larger streets. The faint yet pungent odour breathed of nipa thatch and bamboo flooring, of cocoanut-shell bowls and pots of sun-baked clay.

The sheer flavour of it brought to Anne's mind the memory of another breath—one that had haunted the windows of an old college tower long ago, in another and happier world. Without closing her eyes, she thrilled again to the tang of salt-water and pine-balsam, of ripening wheat and bee-ravished honeysuckle, mingled with the faint, dry scent of ivy. Long ago? How long ago!

“Shall I tell the boy to have the punkah stopped?” asked a quiet voice.

“The punkah?”

“I thought you shivered.”

She was too grateful for his solicitude to dissemble. “I’m only a little tired, perhaps.”

“If only you wouldn’t try to do so much!”

“You mean I overdo?”

“Well, everyone does in Manila, you know. And when one shivers on a warmish night! I’ve heard something about dengue fever in the Philippines.”

“It isn’t overdoing; that isn’t it.” She checked herself barely in time. “You know when one is hostess, she’s bound to be something of a Martha. And, then, she has her husband to please as well as her guests.”

He nodded understandingly, yet she fancied she caught a gleam in his eye which all his self-restraint could not hide, a look which said: “Ah! Your husband!”

It puzzled her. She fancied it expressed more than pity for herself or longing to protect her—more than

anger at Dick. Was her husband despised or laughed at?—distrusted or feared? And why? Shades of meaning in the manner of other men toward him began to occur to her mind. She conjured up reservations of speech, subtleties of conduct. She tortured herself by attempts to understand significances which her more sensible self told her did not exist.

Crittenden's unconscious look burned into her. She began to feel more hurt than puzzled. Was it pity for Dick or for herself that those words expressed—“Ah! Your husband!” He might almost have spoken them outright! She hugged the pain of them to her. For a moment, she felt the egotistic grief of a pride-wounded child.

Then the morbid feeling vanished. Her saner self told her how great his regret would be if he dreamed that he had wounded her. What wild meaning had she conjured up from a casual glance! If he were able, he would protect her from all harm—from everyone. She knew that well. She studied him covertly.

He was a strong man. In profile his jaw stood almost menacingly square. His chest was deep and rounded. His blue eyes were profound, kind, resolute. A man to rely upon.

His white mess-jacket, with the gold shoulder-knots, his dark-blue trousers bearing the band of his corps—it was a uniform designed for such a man, at once quiet and distinguished, reserved and forceful. Even the little flame of ribbon above his heart, whose precise significance she was not quite sure of, she knew bore witness to the steadiness of character she had long since discovered in him.

Thin and eerie with distance sounded the pipes of a

knife-grinder. The plaintive notes were drowned by the ready laughter of Señora Sanchez over a facetious sally of Burton's. Near these two, Julie and Dick talked to each other in almost inaudible tones. Crittenden's eyes went from them to Anne.

In the half-light of the candles her face looked paler than usual—her eyes were shadowed. It seemed to him that they were heavy with more than fatigue—perhaps with tears. Her lashes were tipped with the gold of the candle-light, and exquisite in their length and perfect curve. Her nose, faintly aquiline, and mouth, ever so little arched—the one with a hint of drollery and the other with a touch of pride—could not overcome the sorrow of her eyes. He wondered fiercely if her husband had begun to bully her!

A glance at Dick reassured him. Nelson was not the man to bully his wife—at any rate, in the ordinary meaning of the word. Nor was Anne one to submit to bullying. Her eyes met his.

“Have you been working hard of late?” she asked. “I didn’t see you at Fort McKinley to-day—at the review.”

“I was busy in town—an inspection of a detachment of Constabularios.”

“Ah, yes,” she returned vaguely. Then his words took significance for her. She remembered Helen’s startled face and sudden stillness a day or two before, when she had happened to read aloud an item from a newspaper.

“Does inspection mean—rumours of war?”

“Hardly that. There may have to be a little police work.”

"The newspaper said something about a gang of bandits—in Mindanao. Is it anything serious?"

"Broadly speaking, no. But there's a man who must be 'had,' and the particular case is always likely to be—interesting—when one is dealing with Moros."

Her thoughts were still on Helen's palour. "Those dreadful knives—the *barongs* and *krisses*! If there is trouble, I hope Bob Duncan won't have to go."

"Tell *him* that, if you want to make an enemy of him."

"Oh, I know! He's fairly praying for active duty, of course. And of course someone must go; I understand that. But I was thinking of Helen March."

"There's always someone else, isn't there? When a man goes out to do a man's work, he always leaves the dearest—some sort of dearest thing in life behind."

His tone was entirely colorless, yet she leaned back in her chair as if to withdraw her face from the candle-light.

"Surely you wouldn't—Would you have to go into the field?"

He managed a laugh. "We've already got a campaign in full swing, haven't we?"

His eyes were so bright that she knew for her own sake she dared pursue the subject no further. She turned to Burton who sat at her other side, but although she smiled and nodded at the pauses in his rather self-satisfied talk, her attention was with Crittenden as he leaned toward Señora Sanchez.

That lady was talking archly, and with the least touch of condescension, as became the wife of a rising politico.

"You meilitary men are so funny, Major Crittenten-den."

"Why, Señora?"

"I bowed to you yesterday on de Escolta, and yet you deed not even salute-a me—poor little me!"

"I must have been asleep."

"Asleep! On de Escolta?"

"Perhaps I was dodging an automobile."

"No, no! It was not an automobile."

"I remember now. I had been seized by that big policeman, and was being led away blindfolded."

"No, no, no—not you, Major Crittenden! You are joking. No, no. You were only blindfolded to *me*. It was because you were looking once, twice, s'ree times over your s'oulder—so!—at a woman."

"When you were near, Donna Bella?"

"Ah, yes, because de oder woman ees very pretty."

"But *you* were there, too."

"You clevere soldier! But it is no matter—I mus' fergeev you. De oder woman was Meesses Nelson—beside you now."

After all, Anne reflected, were such sallies on Señora Sanchez' part any more inane than those which regularly pass muster at any Anglo-Saxon dinner-table? The mestiza's emptiness of mind was a matter of her personality, not of her race.

Lack of experience prevented Don Miguel Sanchez from laying hold of this comforting thought. Always alert, from the other side of the table he had cocked his ear to his wife's conversation. How in the name of ten thousand saints could the Americans ever be convinced that the Filipinos were fit to stand alone, when his own wife—the wedded spouse of Miguel Sanchez

himself—could talk so childishly! He could hardly veil his glance of contempt. Had he not expressly ordered her to discover the American officer's views upon the probable results of an expedition that rumour had it was to be made against certain bandits in Mindanao? And she was wasting time in silly coquettices! Sanchez felt it imperative to know what was likely to happen in Mindanao—he had heavy hemp interests there.

In twirling his moustache, he let his fingers smooth his face lest his thoughts should leave any lines there. The thoughts ran on: If the results of the bandits' activities promised to be serious enough to frighten the hemp-planters from their crops, his fortune was made. If not—if not—well, could not such activities be stimulated by aid of a few rifles furnished through a discreet and convenient intermediary. Sanchez had some acquaintance with the course of the Rio Grande de Mindanao—he began to make a mental list of native chiefs that lived along it. In the midst of his list he brought his mind up with an alarmed jerk! It was dangerous even to think of such things! Highly dangerous to think of, even more so to engage in, and yet—the price of hemp must be made to advance.

He scrutinized his wife again, but restrained his vexation at a new thought. Perhaps Bellita was only making preliminary use of one of woman's best weapons—coquetry—in order to acquire the information he desired. The half-scowl left his face, and he smiled at her affectionately. Certainly his wife was a very pretty woman—and an American officer might be as susceptible as any other man!

The idea suddenly presented infinite possibilities to him. He fell into a day-dream, his glance going from

one face to another, his lips moving imperceptibly with arguments addressed to Bella, to himself, to Crittenden.

The soup, for whose compounding a giant turtle from the Sulu Sea had surrendered his life, the *lapulapu*, Sultan among fishes, the tiny Laguna rice-birds, the island-bred turkey, flanked by native sweet potatoes and by bamboo sprouts—these had come and gone. A delicious salad of cocoanut buds caused Burton and Paul Smythberg to exchange appreciative glances.

Dick was deep in talk with Julie, his smile quick and vague, his eyes shining upon her.

She wore a gown of green silk, shimmering and vivid. The slimness of her neck and waist flared rather startlingly into the suptuous lines of her shoulders and bust. Her hair was parted and drawn over her ears in a fashion Parisian rather than British, yet not so low as to hide the long jade ear-rings whose black-green contrasted oddly with the extreme blondness of her hair. She was listening to Dick without looking at him, her head drooped, her smile infrequent and guarded, her face expressionless to Anne's eyes.

Above the monotonous swell of Burton's voice at her shoulder, other words floated to Anne.

From Dick: "How can one help doing it when . . . If you believe me, then you must . . . Cruelty from you, Julie, only drives . . . Yes, yes, I know, I know. But when one has cried for the moon long enough, then surely it's time to——"

But from Julie, Anne caught only a murmur, a hint of passion reflecting that in Dick's voice—in the unsteady sound of it.

And again, from Dick: "The moon, Julie—the desire of it——"

Anne wondered if their talk were really intimately significant, or if it were actually as meaningless as that of Señora Sanchez and Crittenden. She gave herself a mental shake. Perhaps the latter was right—she must be overtaxing her strength, for certainly she was growing morbid.

Seeking protection from her own thoughts, she turned to Crittenden, who was staring unseeingly before him.

"Why frown so at that candle?"

He started ever so slightly. "The candle? Was I frowning? I suppose I was wondering about the fate of the moth."

For a moment she fancied the remark was an idle one. "Why, the moth is usually singed, isn't he, according to tradition?"

"Yes," he said, "and better be singed than ignore the glory of the flame. But——"

"Well?"

"Suppose the moth should by some miracle extinguish the light! Wouldn't that be worse than being scorched even?" His voice fell a note. "He's bewildered—flies in too recklessly, drawn by that light he can't resist, and—out goes the candle!—perhaps from sheer annoyance. That would be hard on the moth—wouldn't it?"

Her fan hid her lips. "Oh, I'm not sure. No, not very. He'd probably flutter on to another candle—in a little while."

"Evidently you don't believe much in the single-heartedness of—of moths."

"At least as much as you do in the steadiness of candles."

He looked at the cosmos bloom which he had taken from beside her plate. Anyone hearing only the deep mutter of his voice might have supposed him to be expounding the beauties of the flower.

"I believe in the steadiness of one candle—one that seems to me to shine wonderfully. I believe in its purity and loveliness as I believe in a Heaven. I know it's true and warm and kind—and if only it burned for me—"

"Oh, no!" she breathed. "Don't! Don't!" And then, very pitifully, "Please!"

"I—couldn't help it," he said. "You needn't be afraid—again."

As they sat thus, the thrum of guitars from the next street waxed louder. The sound swelled, drew nearer, until the tread of feet could be heard above the tune. Then, in the starlit darkness beyond the garden, a group of Filipino lads—perhaps from the University—went past, singing gaily, feet, guitar, and words swinging together:

"I've got er-rings on my fin-gaires,
And bells on my toes,
Elephan's to er-ride upon,
My leetle Iris' Er-rose!
Den come to your Nabob
On nex' San Patrig's Day—
Be Meestress Mumbo Jumbo
Jeebojoojay O'S'ay!"

The lilt of the feet, the eager throb of the guitars, the false emphasis of the words, went by, grew fainter. Very far and thin, a voice began the verse:

“Jeem O’S’ay was cast away
Upon an Indian isle.
De natives dere dey liked hees hair,
Dey liked hees Iris’ smile—”

The last sound died away down the street, but still all the men at the table sat listening as if in a maze. Dick was smiling vaguely; Sanchez’ lips were parted; Smythberg had hitched his chair about toward the window, whether in irritation or eagerness his heavy face gave no sign; Rumong’s head was sunk on his chest; Burton, his head thrown back, contemplated the ceiling; Crittenden stared at the cloth in front of him.

Perhaps each man, in his own way, heard in those words so oddly rendered to the ringing tune—in those confident yet careless feet—the uncertain music of the future.

XX

A CRY FOR THE MOON

WHEN the women had withdrawn to the azotea, and the soft-footed muchachos had poured the men whiskey and soda and provided cigars and cigarettes, Dick Nelson—apropos of a remark of Sanchez'—began to talk with a fluency and freedom that would have amazed Anne had she been able to hear him. He spoke, indeed, as if inspired by some heady wine—as if expressing by a sparkle of words an exhilaration he could not wholly restrain.

“There’s no reason why the Filipinos shouldn’t have independence now—I mean within a few months, granted always an agreement in the matter between America and Japan.”

“Germany?” inquired Smythberg, ever-so-faintly sarcastic.

Dick’s cigaretted hand wreathed Germany in smoke. “Oh, we needn’t consider Germany—she hasn’t any rights here. Besides, she is busy getting ready for England. Neither America nor England need heed her until *der Tag*, and *der Tag* will be chosen by herself on any excuse that’s handy when she’s ready. And, mind; ‘the day’ will be for America as well as for England. Well—Germany is out of it for the present.”

“England, then?”

“England will always protect her own everywhere, with or without a treaty. We don’t have to have a specific agreement with her to keep hands off. But

Japan—there's the rub!—nothing can be done without Japan. Granted an agreement between her and the United States, the Philippines can easily have their own Government—their own nation. That's all the neutralization we want."

"What sort of Government would we Filipinos be able to maintain at the end of a year—at the end of ten or twenty years?" asked Rumong.

"Yes—look at Mexico!" The command emerged from behind a rampart of bottles and glasses and cigar-smoke like a sallying-party from a fortress.

"Just so—look at Mexico, if you like," retorted Dick. "The Filipino could have as good a Government as Mexico's, right now—or as Central America's, or South America's."

"As good a Government?"

"Oh, not very good, I grant you. But it *is* a Government after all—an independent sovereignty, such as it is. Perhaps the Filipinos would fight among themselves. Very well—let them. Why not? Every other nation does as much or has done it. Even America has had one Revolution and one desperate Civil War."

Burton, behind his rampart, held his cigar steeply cocked in the corner of his mouth, his head nodding from time to time as if assuring himself that he knew the other's arguments even before they were advanced. His glance, shrewd and quizzical, and determinedly tolerant, passed over and beyond Dick. From time to time he lost himself in a calculation as to the probable amount of the surtax on his last shipment of material ordered from the United States. He had sent in that order too hastily, perhaps. Now, the cost price, plus

the freight, plus customs duties, but less the special discounts allowed him by the manufacturers would be —hum-m! Well, he might make a small profit after all.

Near the head of the table, Crittenden sipped his *crème de menthe*. His face, almost genial, seemed to express more than attention or even interest—it showed sympathy and a real desire to understand another's point of view.

Sanchez turned his alert eyes from Dick to the Americans—to the Englishman. The tips of his thumb and forefinger occasionally touched the ends of his small moustache. Now and then, also, his teeth showed between his parted lips as if he restrained himself with difficulty from reënforcing Dick's views. In his eagerness, he spilled a little whiskey from his overfull glass, and mopped it with his napkin, murmuring vague apologies the while.

From the azotea came the soft laughter of Señora Rumong. Julie Smythberg's green-beaded slipper and green-silked ankle were revealed in the faint light from the doorway. A crown of golden hair, graciously inclined over a silver pot, showed that their hostess was pouring coffee.

Dick's eyes searched the shadows a moment, then he flowed on. "With an understanding between Japan and the United States to prevent interference from outsiders, the Filipinos could manage their internal affairs well enough now, and in time very well."

From the rampart a bomb was thrown, thrown with an air of triumph as if to write in fiery letters on the wall: "Now, observe how this house of cards shall tumble!"

"The Moros!"

Dick's waving hand tossed the bomb into harmlessness. "Ah, that old bugaboo—the Moros! I was expecting that. Well, I suppose you won't deny that the Tagalogs and the Visayans and the Ilocanos have superior ability, and, therefore, better organization and discipline. They showed that in the fighting with the Americans. And being Christian tribes they'll stand together against the Mohammedans."

Burton lit another cigar. "Yes, and the Mohammedans'll stand together against *them*! You've seen the old watch-towers along the coast, haven't you? The Moros used to keep the Islands in terror."

"That's the word—they 'used to.' But times have changed. The Christian population has discipline now. Discipline? Why, within another year or two there will have been twenty thousand men or more trained in the Scouts and Constabulary by the American Government. They'll be made use of, of course, against the Moros."

"They've been made use of already, and Federal troops, too, but the Moro problem still exists."

"Yes," returned Dick. "But we all know *why* it exists—because the Government at home won't let it be treated properly and wisely—that is, with a severity that in the long run always saves bloodshed. The Moros will be handled under a Filipino Government as America doesn't dare to handle them. The Anti-Imperialist Societies, the Peace Unions, and the Amalgamated Whiners generally, who feel and don't think, have never let common-sense be used with savages. The Filipinos would handle the Moros without gloves, without rose-water—by the wholesale, once and forever, I think."

In spite of himself, Sanchez' eyes swept triumphantly the Americans, the Englishman, Rumong—even himself—to make sure that his triumph was kept within the bounds of politeness. He glanced over Burton's head to see how the servants were impressed by the argument. The head-boy was absorbed in drawing the cork of a fresh bottle—another was flicking a dust-spot from one of his scarlet *chinelas*. Sanchez felt disappointed in his countrymen. After all, *taos* and sons of *taos* were only fit to be ruled by the *gente ilustrada!*

He did not altogether like Dick Nelson, but certainly he was talking very cleverly that night—very convincingly—in fact, in a way to impress the foreigners with the culture and force of the Filipinos. Dick himself smiled gently at his cigarette end, satisfied with himself and with the impression he was making, exhilarated by the thoughts within him as by a heady wine.

Crittenden was twirling his liqueur glass very slowly in his long fingers. In the tiny glass, the ice, clear yet appearing to be of infinite depth, shone as green as the moon now peering through the open window. An emerald heart glowed in the ice and seemed to hide an ultimate truth for one who could gaze unflinchingly.

“I believe in independence for the Islands in good time,” he said. “But just now what about the industrial and agricultural problems? What will be the financial resources of the Republic of the Philippines, when it's established?”

Silence followed—a silence that Burton's earlier bomb had not been able to produce. The merchant shot

a glance of would-be understanding at Crittenden, but the latter was looking deep into the emerald heart of his liqueur. The other's cigar took a sharper cock upward.

No sound was heard except a musical bubbling as Smythberg poured more soda into his glass. His eyes watched the bubbles carefully, but there was—so Sanchez fancied—an air of finality in his motion.

The Assemblyman waited for Dick to answer. Then he started to speak himself, his teeth gleaming a little under his black moustache, wiped his mouth with his napkin, and startled by its forgotten wetness, bit into it, and so held himself silent. His eyes still strained upon Dick.

But the latter only stared at the slowly-twirling glass of green liqueur in Crittenden's fingers as one gazes at a lark-mirror—stared until his head began to whirl.

After a time, he was conscious of a great curve of green light beyond the window-sill. His glance went from the glass to the moon, and to the moon-bathed azotea where Julie Smythberg sat in full view, fanning herself with languid grace—and came back to the circle of silent men.

He drew a long breath. "Ah! one must always cry for the moon," he said. "If one cries long enough and hard enough, he is bound to get it—at last." His glance went back to the moon-bathed azotea.

XXI

AN AMERICAN CITIZEN

It was nearly midnight when the last dinner-guest had gone. Dick returned to the sala after seeing the Smythbergs into their carriage.

“Thank Heaven, that’s over!” he declared. “I think I’ll go down to the University Club for a while. There was to be a smoker there to-night—probably it’s still holding on.”

They bade each other good-night in that formal if polite fashion which—it seemed to Anne—was never to regain anything of friendliness, not to say affection.

By the time Dick reached the Club, the glory of the smoker had, in fact, somewhat waned. But enough dauntless spirits were still at hand to chant college songs, and now and then to lift a ragged cheer.

“‘For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow’ came roaring out to meet Dick as he sauntered in, immaculate, cool, faintly smiling.

“Hello! Here’s Nelson! Come, sit down, Nelson, and give us a lead in the ‘Orange and the Black.’ We’ve had about everything else.”

“Everything else liquid or vocal?” he smiled.

“Both, both! Come, take your share, while the taking’s good.”

But he managed to elude the invitation, and glancing about, saw what he sought—a long-nosed, melancholy-looking man seated alone at a table. He was staring out across the electric-lighted street to the shadows on the public play-grounds of Wallace Field,

and puffing from time to time at a remarkably long and thick cigar.

“Why will you smoke those ridiculously large cigars, Gorsjiu?” demanded Dick as he sat down beside him. “They look as if you’d stolen them from a wooden Indian.”

“Why will you smoke those silly little cigarettes?” retorted the consul. “Because you like? Very good! That answer is enough. The same with me.” He took the giant from his mouth, and contemplated it complacently. “Besides, this cigar—the tobacco in it—was grown particularly for me in the Cagayan Valley.”

“But why do you *like* to?” persisted Dick. “Why do *I* like to?—like to do anything?”

“Ah!” said the other. “You are inclined for philosophy to-night, is that it? Is it Confucius you have been reading, or Nietzsche? Or—what does the English poet say?—

“‘My only books were women’s looks,
And folly’s all they taught me.’

That last kind of philosophy is only for boys.”

The younger man gave him a quick glance, but the consul puffing at his great cigar, watched a ring of smoke float from the open-sided room and fade into nothingness.

“I’m only twenty-seven,” said Dick defiantly.

“Alexander had conquered the world at twenty-seven. Napoleon was beginning to do so. William Pitt—was it not?—was Prime Minister of England at twenty-three.”

“Well?”

“Yes. They did very well—so it seems to me.”

Dick frowned straight before him. "Life was simple for them. They knew what they wanted in this world, and they went straight for it—and it was a simpler world a hundred years ago."

"You, also, know what you want, do you not?"

"Ye—es—perhaps I do. But what I'm not so sure of is this: is what I want worth while? Is it worth the wanting? Is it worth the fighting for?"

Gorsjiu glanced sharply about. "Not so loud, my friend, if you please! Those young madmen over there are making a lot of noise with their songs, but still—not so loud."

"Pshaw! I'm not talking about physical fighting. I mean the war of the mind—of the spirit. Is any ambition worth the weary struggle that seems necessary to obtain it? That's what worries me!"

"If it is not to be struggled for, then it is not an ambition," said the other. "An apple that drops from a tree into one's mouth must have the taste of dust and ashes always." He scrutinized Dick with almost contemptuous curiosity. "Is it really possible that you have been reading philosophy—some dark philosophy without a hope, perhaps? If so, I suggest to you to turn again to your Bible."

"Bible! You don't mean to say *you* ever read the Bible? Besides, you're a Japanese!"

"I always keep a copy of the Christian Gospels in my room—in Latin, to be sure, for I cannot read the Greek. I learned to know the Bible at Heidelberg. I am a Christian—and, also, a Shintoist."

"Not both at once, man!"

"Why not? There may be good in all religions. I study the Divine Law continually."

“You!” Dick stared, then broke into laughter, jeering and bitter.

Gorsjiu eyed him sourly. “It amuses you! Why, may I ask?”

“Don’t be an ass, Gorsjiu. You to talk about studying the Divine Law, when you’re busy every minute in the day trying to break other laws—the Law of Nations!”

“The one has nothing whatever to do with the other,” returned the consul stiffly. But he was forced to smile, even if with grim reluctance, when the irony of his words was driven home to him by Dick’s renewed laughter.

“Very good! Perhaps you are right to laugh at me. But what of yourself?”

“Of *me*? I don’t pretend to study the Divine Law ‘continually,’ ” retorted Dick with relish.

“Ah!”

Dick fell into a day-dream. But after a moment or two the consul’s long nose was again turned toward his friend.

“I have heard—from the North—about our business.”

Dick eyed him with evident indifference, but the other persisted. “Yes, twenty thousand—ah—rakes, shall we say?—yes, rakes, with a half million rounds—I mean, a half million extra teeth—are ready for shipment whenever our agriculturists are ready to make use of them.”

“Let’s drop gibberish,” said Dick testily yet with caution. “I’ve never been convinced a Filipino army would or could actually take the field unless at least

half of the rifles from Formosa should have Japs to carry them."

"Impossible! Impossible! My Government will never take such a step. England is a friend of America, and England would not permit such open action. Never—no, no! It is useless to dream of it. Let the rising begin here as we have planned, by means of your money—your influence—my friend. Let there be a native army in the field; a pretence of it, at least. Then my Government can step in to protect its nationals—yes, can use its good offices to protect even the Americans who are so few in numbers here. And once in, never out! That is Japan's rule! And you, you whose—ah—influence will have made it all possible! But a day or two ago I received a letter from Baron Kudo. He has authorized me to say that a Philippines principality as a protectorate of my Government, a principality with yourself as—" An impatient wave of Dick's hand forced him to a surprised silence.

Under the Club windows an automobile bounced down Calle San Luis to a great clamour of the signal-horn. A trolley-car, barely missing it, roared out of the narrow cañon of Calle Real on to the Luneta, and went whirring on toward the Walled City.

Silhouetted against the rain-trees of Wallace Field, four or five files of stalwart American soldiers swung along, rifle on shoulder—doubtless a relief guard for some of the scattered property of the Army. Gorsjiu leaned forward, and watched them until they were swallowed up in the shadows.

The two men had all along been conscious of the uproar sustained by the surviving members of the

smoker in the room behind them. Latterly, there had been a series of broken and cheer-punctuated utterances which by a liberal construction might be accepted as speeches made in response to toasts. Now, aware of an unusual and prolonged silence, the friends looked about.

A young man, just now excessively grave of aspect, a tall glass of whiskey and soda in his hand, was balancing himself with difficulty but with determined dignity in front of Dick.

"Mr. Nelson," he said, with an utterance deliberate rather than thick, "I have had the honour, sir—to be deputed—by these gentlemen—to request you to respond to the toast—that has just been given—sir."

Dick smiled. "Oh ask one of the others, Mr. Brown. I must ask you to excuse me to-night."

The other fixed an unwinking, not to say reproving, eye upon him. His manner became even more grave. "Impossible—to excuse you, sir. There are certain things—expected of a gentleman upon an occasion—such as this." He tapped himself on the chest with his disengaged hand. "My condition—this sort of thing—is one of those things, sir."

"Oh, you must excuse me."

"Certainly, sir. Such—a condition is not—absolutely necessary. But what I refer to *is*. You are the only American—American citizen present who has not responded to the toast—sir. It is necessary—in the opinion of myself and other gentlemen present—that you should do so."

Dick shrugged his shoulders at Gorsjiu resignedly. "Well, what is the toast?"

"I refer, sir—to the—the shibboleth of every patri-

otic American—and American citizen.” He lifted his glass solemnly—so high that a little of the liquid was spilled over upon his disordered hair. “To the Great Republic! May her enemies be confounded forever!”

There was a long and heavy silence. Gorsjiu did not look at Dick, but the latter, by a sidelong glance, saw that the faces of half the men in the room were turned expectantly in his direction.

“I am—to escort you to the chair—sir,” said Brown, balancing himself with a dignity so portentous that it had become almost lachrymose.

Dick got to his feet. “Of course,” he said. “I’ll be glad to speak—on such a subject.”

He accepted the assistance of the portentous young man’s arm, and moved to a table near the centre of the room. There he bowed slightly to the circle awaiting him, stared dreamily about, passed his hand over his face, and began to speak.

Gorsjiu’s unscrupulousness had its limitations. As Dick began, the consul, staring steadily out the window, tilted back his chair, and clasped his hands behind his head as if to balance himself at ease. By pressing in his elbows he was able effectually to close his ears to sound without attracting attention to himself.

So he sat until a ripple of applause, penetrating his extemporised sound-barriers, told him that Dick’s ordeal was over.

As the other regained his seat, Gorsjiu eyed him covertly. Dick’s face was flushed, and he lit a cigarette with fingers that trembled. When their eyes met, he smiled, but not pleasantly.

For a while both smoked in profound silence. Dick

was the first to speak. "Do you suppose there was anything more than chance in that?"

"No. It was chance only, I am sure of that. A drunkard's chance! Fortunately it means nothing; nothing but too much whiskey in young brains. If anything were suspected about—our business, the effect of such suspicions would not reach us first through the antics of a lot of silly boys. It would reach us—in a more unpleasant way—through our friend Major Crittenden probably. No, no—it is not on account of—the business."

"Damn the business! I'm thinking of something else. I noticed that fool insinuated that I'm only an American *citizen*. Was that chance? Or what did he mean?"

"He was drunk," declared Gorsjiu bluntly.

"Your speaking about business reminds me," said Dick after an interval. "We can't use my office any more for our business talks."

"We cannot?"

"No."

He threw away his half-smoked cigarette, and lit another. Gorsjiu noticed that his fingers still shook but, as it seemed to him, no longer with rage or shame.

"No. I may want to use the office—at any time—for other matters."

The consul blew a thick cloud of smoke toward the ceiling. Through the haze his white hair and long nose made him look almost druidical.

"Ah!" he said.

Dick's quick eyes fixed him aggressively. "Why do you say 'Ah'?"

"Did I say so? Very good! I will say 'Oh,' if

you prefer it." His tone was so placid that Dick could only shrug his shoulders.

"At any rate we can't use my office any more," he said doggedly. "What's the matter with yours?"

"No, no. That is quite impossible. There are always eyes—unfriendly eyes—on the office and even on the house of a consul. And nothing is easier for a Government than to withdraw an *exequatur*. No—we must find another place. Hum-m! Let me think. There is a *tiadero* in your neighborhood—a Chino—his name is Fong. His shop is on the edge of the *barrio* beyond your house. I happen to know he has a hut—a sort of godown—which is quiet enough for our business."

"Is *he* quiet enough?"

"You may trust me to be sure of that. He has long been an employee—in our business. In fact, he is that *El Diablo* who has made himself so useful to us. Some of your money has been distributed through him."

Dick nodded absent-mindedly. Looking at his watch, he got to his feet. "After one o'clock! I must be going. I want to look in at the Army and Navy Club a few minutes before going home. *Adios.*"

"*Adios,*" responded the other without troubling to turn his head.

But a moment after his friend had gone, Gorsjiu rose, and sauntered off through the reading-room to a window that opened on a little iron balcony overhanging the street.

Dick was standing in the archway of the *entrada* almost directly below. But instead of stepping into the runabout in which the consul had seen him arrive, he left it as it stood, and moved down Calle San Luis

toward the Army and Navy Club. As he swung under the electric lamp at the corner, he twitched the brim of his straw hat down over his eyes, and turned up Calle Real away from the Luneta.

“Ah! To Malate!” said Gorsjiu very softly.

He reflected that there was but one chance in a thousand that Dick Nelson—on foot at that hour—would be seen by anyone who knew him.

XXII

MOON-MADNESS

His lips pursed in a soundless whistle, his hat pulled well over his eyes, Dick walked swiftly but easily up Calle Real, through Ermita into Malate.

These names were once applied to separate villages strung along the Camino Real that leads from the Walled City of Manila to the town of Cavite Viejo. Now, however, the expanding city has absorbed the barrios until these two, at least, have become mere memories. That part of the Royal Road is now but the Royal Street, and the straggling hamlets where once cocks fought and pigs roamed and chubby brown children played in the dust have been changed into haunts of fashion until only the veteran Manilan has knowledge of oldtime bypaths.

Dick met few persons, and these he did not trouble himself about; for he knew no one would give two thoughts to a man like himself who apparently had chosen to walk homeward in the cool of the night rather than to ride.

At a distance past Malate Church—where the statue of Queen Isabela the Second scornfully turns its back on passers-by—he inclined down a side-street, and thence following obscure lanes, came out on the shore of the bay.

The water went shimmering before him, one vast silvery mist. Spots of phosphorus danced here and there like gleeful stars adrift. A fish leaping all its length was no more than a hand's-breadth of bright

metal. Across the silvery mists a lighthouse opened a red eye. In the distance, the hull of a brigantine moved as if by magic, its sails invisible in the moonlight. Little waves lapped the shore with a sighing breath of expectation and delight.

The tide was high. To the southward, a tiny strip of beach clung to the base of garden-walls as if to escape the almost engulfing waters. Little pointed piles of sand, blown or washed against the stone posts, looked weirdly like clutching fingers. Along this strip of beach Dick made his way.

The garden walls rising higher than his head on the one side, and the far-shimmering bay on the other, gave no vantage-ground for chance observers, even had not the lateness of the hour made the possibility of their presence not worthy of consideration. Besides, the moon shone so bright overhead that against the pearl tints of the sand, the ivory of the walls, and the silver of the water, his white-clad figure was indistinguishable to any save the most attentive eye. Above all, he was in a mood to be oblivious of considerations of caution.

Following the ribbon of sand—in places hardly so wide as his own slim feet—he found himself at last skirting a wall built in a peculiar fashion, its lower half of whitewashed brick, its upper of iron bars set vertically well apart.

Close behind it, a pair of noble trees whose boughs touched and intermingled, almost hid the veranda of a spacious house.

Midway along the wall he stopped, and stood intently listening. The garden and the house within it were very still. A lizard, lurking somewhere among the

leaves of one of the great trees, now and then croaked sleepily. The sound served only to render more significant the utter quiet. The twisted fronds of a tree-fern waved without a rustle. The embowered house, its tiled roof frosted by the moon, seemed to be expectant, breathless.

There was ample light to scan the face of his watch; it was almost half-past one. And half-past one was the hour!—if at all.

He took off his hat, folded the flexible straw, and slipped it into his coat-pocket. Then, facing the dark and silent house, he thrust his arms between the bars, dragged himself forward, and so remained, his chest swelling against the metal—like a prisoner who strains continually at the barriers that hold him from his own.

Seen from the veranda, his face must have loomed startlingly pale, framed on each side by a black bar of iron, and above by the black mass of his hair. Thence, too, it must have seemed worshipping, imploring, glamorous.

Minutes passed. Still he hung against the bars, so motionless that he seemed not to breathe. A mist stole in from the bay, and enwrapped his feet. It slipped from knees to waist—to shoulders. His body was one with that silvery haze, no more substantial than a moon-shadow. Only his pale face, outlined in black, stood out from the wavering vapour.

How long he clung there he could not have told—time was a blank. Suddenly he pressed closer to the bars; the leaves of the trees enshrouding the veranda-railing were being agitated, the intermingling boughs pressed apart.

In the mass of leaves, as in the hollow of a great green hand, appeared a woman. The moon shone full upon her, and made of her a glory of silver. She was all in white, and her hair fell over her neck and shoulders to her waist. Her arms, lifted to hold wide the boughs, were lustrous and round. Her face was turned toward that of the man at the wall. Her eyes, no longer veiling her thoughts, looked straight into his.

In her figure, inclined toward him—in that divine arc—he saw a yielding, a promise, an assent.

At the thought—at the message of her unveiled eyes—he drew a breath so deep that the bars burned his chest like a white-hot band. A pang shot through his whole body, mordant, thrilling, enrapturing.

At the very height of his delicious pain, the silvery glory faded from the hollow of the leaves. The boughs sprang together.

Without an instant's hesitation, he gripped the tops of the iron bars, and vaulted cleanly over.

XXIII

THE STREAK

THE blow fell upon Anne with appalling suddenness.

She had risen early on the morning after the night of the dinner, and was sitting on the azotea which overlooked the river. Here she was beguiling the time, until it should please Dick to appear for breakfast, by a little study of Spanish language exercises. Even before leaving America she had made some progress in that easy and melodious tongue, and was now fairly proficient in its use.

She was thus occupied when the head-boy brought word that a woman caller awaited her in the sala.

“A caller at seven o’clock in the morning? Where’s the card, Braulio?”

“Dere ees no card, modham.”

“Didn’t she give you her name, then?”

“No, modham. I could not understan’ what she say. She es-speak Spaneesh only.”

Braulio, as a Pampangan who had attended the American public schools in his native province, spoke only English besides his tribal dialect, and had a sovereign contempt for all who had no knowledge of what he called “Government language.”

“A Spaniard,” mused Anne.

“Filipina, modham,” volunteered Braulio. “I dink she ees Visayan.”

Visions of her laundress desirous of an advance on account, of a shopkeeper’s widow come to sell tickets

for a *beneficio*, of a frightened girl tearful in complaint of the faithless promises of one of the muchachos,—a thing that had once happened,—of a seamstress eager to persuade the “*Señora*” to buy beautiful hand-made lace at ridiculously low prices,—all these came to Anne’s mind.

“ Shall I send her away, modham? ” suggested Braulio. “ Perhaps I shall tell her she mus’ come aftair breakfas’.”

But the opportunity to practise her Spanish led his mistress to a different decision.

“ No. Ask her to come out here, Braulio.”

A moment later she rose to receive her visitor.

The woman who came smilingly toward her was well dressed in the native fashion, her stockingless feet glimpsed below her skirt of rich black silk indicating that she was probably from one of the remoter provinces. From a gold chain about her thin but comely neck hung a painted fan which she tapped gracefully against her bosom as she came forward. The second and third fingers of her left hand held a miniature handkerchief of French lace in such fashion as to attract the eye to the small hand and taper fingers.

Her well-powdered face had the rather broad nostrils, the pointed chin, the light-brown skin, and the fine black eyes of the upper-class Visayan, and would have been distinctly pretty had not the droop of her mouth given promise of petulance and the heavy eyelids spoken of ill health. She seemed to be about forty-five years of age.

In her whole aspect there was something strangely familiar to Anne, although she tried in vain to remem-

ber where they had met. She covered her lack of memory by the cordiality of her greeting.

“Good-morning,” she said in Spanish.

“Good-morning,” returned the visitor in the same language. “I have come very, very early, but I have wished so much to see you. You must forgive me.”

“You are not too early.”

“Thanks. You are good to say so. It is the fault of that steamship—it arrived only at daylight this morning. ‘Sus-Maria-José! what an hour that cruel ship’s captain chose! And my husband says we must return to Cebu to-night. He has come only on business, and I to shop on that dear Escolta.”

Still racking her memory in the effort to place her easy-mannered visitor, Anne offered her a chair. The Filipina sank into it with a little laugh.

“How silly I am! I talk and talk, but you do not know me at all. Why should you? I can see you are graciously trying to remember who I am, but of course you cannot remember because you have never seen me before. But tell me—do I not look a little like someone you know?”

“Yes, you do. I noticed it when you came in. But I can’t think who it is you——”

“It is time I should tell you, is it not so? I am Inez de Aguilar—the one who wrote you a letter a long time ago.”

“You wrote me?”

“Yes—to welcome you to the family. Do you not remember my letter to you?”

Anne smiled inwardly at herself—she could not have understood the other’s meaning.

"I must ask you to speak a little more slowly—my Spanish is not good."

"I am Inez de Aguilar y Toncog, the aunt of your Ricardo."

Anne spoke almost without volition, and quite without realization. "I am very stupid not to understand. Surely you are Filipina?"

"Surely, yes—of the purest blood. Ricardo's mother and I were sisters, of course. They called us the beautiful Toncog girls of Cebu, although my dear Remedios was much prettier than I. Ah! once we were celebrated through all the Philippines. Your Ricardo must have told you how Señor Nelson, his illustrious father, when he first saw my dear sister, Remedios, at our father's house—how he loved her at once. She played marvellously on the harp! Yes, Señor Henrico Nelson loved Remedios dearly. And he was always so kind—to all of us. So, I have so long wished—"

"O—oh!"

The low cry silenced even Señora de Aguilar's voluble tongue. She looked up. Anne was staring at her with stricken eyes.

"My husband! A Filipino! It isn't true!"

The broken words were in English, but the other perfectly understood. An angry red sprang into her cheek, instantly dying out again. A half contemptuous pity lifted the corners of the petulant mouth.

"Ah! Then the little Ricardo had *not* told you the truth—before you were married! I have wondered—many times!"

There was an exclamation behind her. As in a fevered dream, Anne saw Dick flash out from the hall-

way upon Inez de Aguilar, who rose in terror before his glittering eyes. Muttering savagely in Spanish, he seized her by the arm with a grip that made her scream. She was swept from the azotea like a worm.

Still in her painful dream, Anne was conscious that Dick was standing before her, breathing heavily. She said nothing, but stared at him—woefully.

“Well?” he said.

She put out trembling hands. “Oh, Dick! Why didn’t you give me a *chance!*”

He understood. If then and there he had taken her in his arms in spite of her shrinking, even of her possible struggles; if he had made plain to her that the blood of the white race in him would always make him master of himself and her; if, thinking not of himself, but full of love and pity for her, he had pressed her to him, and at the same time thrown himself upon her pity and her love for him, all might have been well.

But it was not in him to do so. The same nature that had led him to hide his secret before marriage, swayed him now. He did not lack courage and boldness—he lacked the power of self-forgetfulness. He stood not so much in the tragedy of soul that held her as in the tragedy of his own humbled pride—the false shame of the blood of the white race for the blood of the brown. He was obsessed by anger at anticipated contempt.

More than all, the equivocation that was of the essence of his character held him from what to another man would have been not only the natural but the inevitable course.

So, although he understood the meaning of his wife’s piteous cry, his answer was fatally inadequate.

“ Damn her! She was always a mischief-maker. She came here deliberately to injure me! ”

“ Oh, never mind her. It’s the truth that matters. You—you aren’t Spanish? ”

“ My mother was a Filipina. That wasn’t her fault —nor mine.”

“ No, no! I know that—I know that! That isn’t your fault.”

“ Well, then? ”

“ Dick, don’t you see!—why didn’t you give me a chance to *choose*! ”

“ Because if I had, *I’d* have had no chance. My own uncle doesn’t know that my mother—wasn’t a Spaniard. He always took it for granted—and my father let him.”

“ But I——”

“ Look here! If your father had ever dreamed his old friend’s son wasn’t a half-Spaniard but a half-Malay, you know *I’d* have been shown the door. Shown the door! You know what he’d have called me! ”

“ No! no! ” Her gesture implored him, but he would not spare her or himself.

“ He’d have called me a ‘ nigger’! ”

“ Don’t! Don’t! ”

“ You know he would! Well—do *you*? ”

“ No! Dick——”

“ You *do*! I knew you would, when you found out. That’s the reason I’ve always done my best to keep it from you. You’re a Southern girl. You were brought up in a miserably intolerant circle. But you can’t help now how you *feel*. Don’t *I* know? Good God! I’ve got that same awful prejudice myself! ”

“ Dick! ”

"Look here! All your life you've been taught to keep your mind—to keep your soul—rotting in a sort of swamp of horrors—black faces and rolling eyeballs and thick lips and slanting foreheads! Do I look like that?"

"No, no! Wait, Dick—please!"

"Yet you're standing there shuddering with disgust at the very sight of me—now that you know."

"I'm not! You don't understand! I know a Malay isn't that—what you said. I've never even dreamed it. But I never dreamed either that I'd married anyone but—"

"But a white man!"

She gave a moan. "Don't be so—so terrible! Don't you see I need a little time—just a breath, Dick—to get used to the idea. That's all."

"I've tried to keep it from you."

"I was bound to find out sooner or later. If you'd only trusted me! It's that that hurts most—you didn't trust me. I see lots of things now—why people have been so kind to me—the Governor-General and—and others. That's why I was asked—you and I—particularly, to dance the rigadoon that time?"

"I suppose so—yes, of course."

"And that's the reason you were so glad to see the people who met us at the pier when we came—the Eastons. You knew they knew?"

He nodded sullenly. "I thought very likely Mrs. Easton had picked up whatever gossip there was."

"Major Crittenden, too! The first time I met him he said he would like to help me if he could. He meant *this*. He knew all about you—and your family?"

"Of course—a Constabulary officer!"

"Yes. I understand—everything—now. They wanted me to feel it didn't make any difference to them."

"Any difference to them even if you had married—me!"

"But Helen March! Did she deliberately let me—?"

"I suppose in America all she knew about me was what she learned from you and Bob Duncan. And even after she came over here she may never have heard anything—about this. The population here has always been so shifting—the American and Spanish part. Probably not many Filipinos, even, remember that my mother wasn't a Spaniard. I'm sure only a few Americans know. Besides, it's not *their* business."

"Oh, I don't mind their knowing! Dick—it isn't your fault that your mother was a Filipina."

His face lighted. "Then—you don't mind so much—?"

"I do mind—terribly—that you aren't what I thought you were. But I think it hurts me even more that you—you didn't tell me."

He began to pace up and down the tiled floor. "I know—I suppose I was wrong. I ought to have told you, back in South Carolina, long ago, but I—I couldn't." Self-pity brought the tears to his eyes.

"I'm so sorry for you—Dick."

He glanced at her sharply. "Sorry for me? What do you mean? What do you intend to do—about this?"

"To do? I—I don't know."

He stopped his quick striding, and gave a short

laugh, full of involuntary relief that the long-dreaded scene was over.

“Well, then,” he said. “It’s about time for breakfast.”

She stared at him in horror. “Breakfast! Oh, Dick! Dick! If you had only been *honest* with me!”

She fled from the room. He stared after her, his eyes gloomy, his teeth biting down—not too hard—on his lower lip.

XXIV

CRUCIFIXION

WHEN Anne next took note of her surroundings, she was being driven along the Malecon Drive. It was far too early in the day for fashion, but Francisco having been given no orders had assumed that his mistress could desire to take the air in no other place.

The breeze blew strongly from the bay, slipping plane after plane of clouds between earth and sky, so that the sun's rays penetrated with only an agreeable warmth.

The giant blades of the cogon grass which made a wilderness of the filled land between the water-front and the roadway, brushed against and whispered to each other until a sustained sigh seemed to shake the very heart of the tangle. Driven from their haunts by the pain of that perpetual moaning, brown-and-white fish-hawks rose above the grass, and flew straight out to sea. At a stake before a squatter's hut, a captive bird wrestled vainly with his rattan leash. Hoarse cries of entreaty and despair were torn from his swelling throat.

At Anne's exclamation of pity, Francisco stopped the horses, descended the box, and released the hawk by a single blow of his ready fan-knife. The bird ran staggeringly a step or two, then soared aloft, glorified.

It seemed to the girl that the rescue of the hawk might be accepted as a work of supererogation, diminishing by ever so little the misery she must certainly endure. Her lip quivered as the carriage rolled

smoothly along the edge of the dry moat, the sound of the wheels accompanied by the whispering of the wind-blown grass.

Through the break in the wall near Fort Santiago, they entered the Walled City. The horses' hoofs rang on the cobbled pavement of the Plaza.

On the farther side, the Ayuntamiento, consecrate to the purposes of the Philippines Government and Assembly, flung its gray bulk from corner to corner. In a building nearby, Don Miguel Sanchez had his committee-rooms, screened and cool—the outer room a repository of voluminous pamphlets and important-looking volumes open to every comer, and the inner, a place of curiously-marked maps and annotated lists of names open to none except the well accredited.

As it happened, if anyone had inquired for the assemblyman that morning, the porter would have been obliged to tell him that Don Miguel was out of town, having gone on a trip to the Southern Islands that very morning—on important business.

In the centre of the Plaza, a bronze statue of Don Carlos IV of Spain dominated a pleasant grove by force of his Bourbon nose. At his feet bubbled a fountain, on whose curb a Filipino drowsed, one leg trailing in the water, the other serving as a perch for a scraggy gamecock.

The coolness and the shadows allured Anne, and when she saw the Cathedral looming beyond, her heart went out to it as to a promise of relief.

As she mounted the great steps, the sunbeams, deflected from the granite slabs, struck upon her pale cheek in delicate amber. An artificial rose, dropped from the last fiesta, moved reluctantly before her white

shoe. The third finger of her left hand, half hidden in her skirt, was crumpled into her palm. Slim and straight, but with her head drooping beneath her wide straw hat, she slipped behind the door-screen into the dimness of the Cathedral.

The place was not vast, yet nave and transepts were mysterious with shadows, save where, above the altar, a cross and an image of the Virgin glowed in the diffused light of hidden lamps. Half-way up the aisle she sank into a seat at the base of a column. Realizing that a mass was being celebrated, she sank farther—to her knees, her head bowed on the back of the chair in front of her.

The church was very still. Only the voice of the priest, intoning unintelligible Latin, and the faint clink of silver as the attending acolyte substituted one sacred vessel for another, broke the perfect quiet.

At times her mind was a blank, penetrated only by the monotonous cadences from the altar. At times, thoughts vague, piteous, poignant, absorbed her.

Here was she—a descendant of a chivalrous gentleman who had led his Legion against Lord Tarleton, of a *grande dame* who had married a President of the United States, of a political philosopher who had fought for the simplest and truest things of life—with ancestors such as these, she was married to—Dick Nelson!

Her thoughts took an even more intimate turn—to the remembrance of a man who had followed her humbly half her life. How many times had he asked her to marry him! He was hopelessly poor and, worse, incorrigibly lazy, yet he had loved her—and she wondered—

Another man came to her mind, and a night when she sat with him on the porch at "Greenlawns," where the Cherokee roses grew so thick and near that they tapped her cheek as she sat. He had spoken, his face pale in the moonlight. How his eyes had shone—perhaps with tears!

Then came the memory of one who had everything that was most desirable—good looks, strength, honour, gentle blood, reasonableness, kindness, love for herself. Yet she had not been able to love him in return, although she had longed to do so, if only for his sake. She prayed now that she had not wounded him irrecoverably.

And now she had given herself to a man who had deliberately betrayed her, who, knowing the prejudices of her birth and training, had kept the terrible truth from her, who had given her no chance to decide for herself. Doubtless he had been silent because then he had loved her and feared that, if he spoke, he might lose her. But how poor a thing had been that love! And even if he had loved her still, was that a sufficient excuse—was it any justification—for the wrong he had done her, for the horror of the position he had placed her in?

Into the chaos of her thoughts broke a tinkling of bells, delicate, ethereal, exquisite and faint as the melody of a hidden brook. Startled, Anne looked up—toward the altar. Her eyes were blinded by a gleam of light lifted in the hands of the priest. It was the Elevation of the Host!

Her faith groped and stumbled. To her it seemed that surely the shapeless and mechanical friar could not believe that at that moment he was holding in his

hands the veritable blood and body of Jesus Christ the Son of God! If he did, he would be lying prostrate, overwhelmed, amazed, possessed of visions—not thus complacent, prodigal of gesture and genuflexion.

But if it were not belief which held him constant to his task, what was it? The answer was plain—Duty!

Duty! The heroism of women held Anne breathless. Images of patient, long-suffering wives thronged her mind, wives much sinned against, tender, unwearying, loving through unfaithfulness, through dishonour—to the end. Yet the women she thought of were of one blood, almost of one family, with their husbands. No racial soul revolted against the men they served!

The mass was finished. Priest and acolyte moved toward the sacristy, the former holding his eyes fixed on a little missal, its print well-nigh impossible to read in that faint light, the latter bearing off with conscious swagger the more valuable of the sacred vessels.

Dimly aware of a form under the arch of one of the transepts, Anne lifted her head a little that she might see over the shoulder of the woman who knelt in front of her. In the broad band of sunlight which had just penetrated the rose window, she saw that terrible image of the Crucifixion which has given the Cathedral its fame.

Aloft on a cross of cypress wood, was the form of a Man—nailed through hands and feet, naked, ghastly, blood dripping from His thorn-pierced head to His beard, a great wound beneath His heart, the red bones protruding from His mangled knees! The woeful Saviour!

The unexpected horror of the sight, the overwhelm-

ing pity of it, gripped the girl's very soul. What were her selfish woes beside the sorrows He had suffered, not for himself but for the sake of the whole world? In Him her trivial agony had already been endured, the sin which caused it already expiated.

If He had borne so hideous a cross for others, it were little enough that she should bear her own. The Christ crucified—the priest elevating the Host—was but an expression of duty well done. Peace stole a little way into Anne Nelson's soul.

Her pitiful anger against her husband had had its access of bitterness because of her recollection of his shining eyes when he had talked with Julie Smythberg the night before. To the sense of duty which helped toward her fast-coming forgiveness of him, was added the feeling of her own unworthiness because of the bitter-sweet Crittenden's presence and words had brought her.

The band of sunlight shifted from the agonizing Figure on the cross, and illumined now only a hand's breadth of tiled floor beneath it. In the lighted patch, a stalwart leg wrapped in a canvas legging, proved a soldier kneeling in the shadow. The woman in front of Anne sighed so softly that the sound seemed only the rustle of a missal leaf.

Peace crept farther into the girl's soul. The wonder of the Sacrifice—the suggestion of ineffable love—enthralled her mind. The subtle appeal of the shadows, the stillness, the haunting mystery of a cathedral, soothed her body. She felt the healing tears rise from her heart to her eyes.

She knelt a long time, her head bowed.

XXV

CONSOLATION

WHEN at last she arose and made her way down the aisle, she was followed by the woman who had been kneeling in front of her. At the door a shy hand was slipped into hers.

“Anne?”

“Why, Helen! Is it you?”

“Yes. I felt rather—rather blue this morning, and I—I thought I’d come in here a little while.” There was a quaver in her voice.

They had emerged into the raw sunlight of the Cathedral steps. Both had somewhat the feeling of the novice who, having for a while found refuge in a convent, has been thrust forth to face again the perils of the world. But before them lay the fountain-grove in greening freshness.

Seeing them from his lounging-place on the grass, Francisco hastened to throw away his cigarette, buckle on his belt, and make ready the horses.

To look at Helen, small, slender of figure, arch of face, was to think that she could never have known a care. The very crispness of her blue linen gown proclaimed the absurdity of associating her with the thought of sorrow or pain. Yet the tremour in the fresh young voice had been unmistakable, and studying her more closely, Anne saw that her eyes were shining with unshed tears. For the time, so far as might be, Anne put her own grief resolutely from her.

"The Cathedral is—a comfort," she said. "You look tired, dear. Is anything worrying you?"

Helen's fingers tightened on her friend's. Glancing up, Anne saw emerging from Calle Palacio into the Plaza—from shadow into sunlight—the van of a little column of men.

Their broad, brown faces and bright black eyes, their short active figures, their khaki uniforms touched with red, showed them to be a Macabebe company of Constabulary. They marched quickly, without ostentation of so much as a single drumbeat or trumpet-note, resolute, calm, efficient, fit embodiment of the Government they represented.

At their head marched Bob Duncan, their *teniente*, already beloved. His eyes looked straight before him—his lips were a little parted in the eagerness of youth and of high ambitions—his shoulders squared to the burden of responsibility for the success of his first independent expedition.

Only at the last moment, as he swung past, did he catch a glimpse under the visor of his helmet of the two women standing on the Cathedral steps. His sword flashed in sharp salute. Nothing more. He continued to move forward at the head of his men, his eyes perhaps a little steadier than before, his shoulders a little more squared.

But Bustos, the shriveled sergeant, in spite of the shielding helmet-brim had caught the wave of colour which brightened his officer's face. Turning his head with the confidence of an old soldier who knows when to disregard regulations, he saw the two women, and noted in that swift glance, the small form, the wistful yet

arch face, the shining eyes, and the trembling lips of the *pequeña señorita*.

The column turned smartly to the left past the entrance to Fort Santiago, and was gone. The two girls remained staring after it as after an apparition.

“Bob Duncan—the Constabulary! Why! where are——”

“They’ve been ordered to Mindanao,” said Helen listlessly.

“You knew it?”

“Yes—since last night. They have hurry orders. He—they—are on their way to the transport now.”

Anne had one of those inspirations which endear a woman to her friends. “Oh, the transport? Then let’s go down and see them off—give them a *despedida* of our own, and wish Bob good luck! I didn’t know he was going away. And yet Major Crittenden did hint at it—last night. Shall we see Bob off? It’ll be a lark.”

“Oh—yes!” Helen’s listlessness vanished. “I’d—love to.”

“Come in my carriage,” said Anne. “You can send yours home.”

“I walked. I wanted to be—alone.”

“To the piers, Francisco.”

They drove through the Plaza, crossed the Malecon Drive, and turned down the lane toward the docks. Barely in sight before them, the rear files of the Macabebes swung lightly along, their dulled and muffled accoutrements giving off no flicker of light nor clank of metal.

Duncan was not visible, hidden by the curves of the road which wound through the tall grass. A little

cloud of dust drifted always upward, always scattered by the breeze blowing from the bay. Twenty miles beyond the smokestacks of the inter-island transport, the blue wall of the Mariveles Mountains marked the passage to the sea.

"His orders to go came very unexpectedly," said Helen softly. "And I—I wasn't very kind to him—last night." And again some minutes later: "Oh, Anne! Those hideous Moro knives!"

Anne's firm pressure of the hand sought to comfort her—to carry to her heart an assurance she struggled with herself to believe sincere.

By the time they reached the pier the constabulary were already embarked. The carriage drew up in the midst of a throng of carromattas from every one of which an incredible swarm of Filipinos—men, women, and children—called and gesticulated to husband, father, son, lover or friend among the Macabebes. They, leaning against the railing of the steamer, returned these farewells by stares of imperturbable calm.

For the most part, those left behind, although noisy, displayed nothing of the softer emotions. Yet here and there a woman furtively wiped her eyes with the hem of her neckerchief, or, planted on the dock's edge below husband or sweetheart, stood staring straight before her with a stolidity that was despair.

Duncan was nowhere to be seen, and as the minutes passed, and the ship's sailors began to make evident preparations to haul in the gang-plank, Helen's face grew paler. She sank farther and farther into the corner of the hooded victoria.

At last Anne, half in despair, caught the eye of the Macabebe sergeant, and beckoned him earnestly. Old

Bustos lifted his helmet in grave acknowledgment, and disappeared. While she was wondering if he could have understood her wish, he came in sight, piloting his officer through the crowd of carromattas.

When Duncan saw the two women, he hurried forward, helmet in hand.

"We've come to see you off," said Anne, giving him her hand. "Aren't you properly grateful? We've quite fallen in love with your little soldiers."

"Aren't they splendid!" he exclaimed.

He glanced at Helen—she was no longer shrinking in her corner, but was leaning forward, her eyes and smile careless, her fingers nonchalantly swinging her hand-bag.

"It's awfully good of you to come down," Bob went on. "*I am* grateful." His eyes had gone back to Anne, but she knew his words were not meant for her.

Nevertheless, she smiled at him. "Bob, you mustn't forget you've a solemn engagement to dance the first waltz with me at the fifth reunion of your class."

"The fifth reunion!" he echoed, astonished. "Why! Oh, of course. Could I forget that? Not while water runs nor fire burns!"

"So, to be sure to be there, you must take care of yourself, you know—in Mindanao."

He gave her a look of grateful understanding. "Thanks—I'll try. It's awfully good of you to bother about me."

His glance strayed to Helen. On his face was the look of the boxer; that look, a little pathetic, which says: "You may strike me, but you cannot force me to stop smiling." The girl did not speak, but sat

smiling carelessly, as one might smile at a mere acquaintance to whom one is determined to be polite.

As they looked at each other, the sergeant called from the deck of the steamer—the gang-plank was about to be run in. Duncan shook hands with Anne.

“I must go. Good-by, Anne.”

“Good-by! Good-by, Bob.”

He hesitated—and held out his hand to the younger girl.

“Helen——”

But under the hood of the victoria, both her hands went out to his—her eyes implored him.

“Oh, Bob! Come back soon—to me!”

His face glowed, then paled. Very reverently, he turned one small hand, and kissed the soft palm.

That parting—the sweetness of her utter surrender—the tenderness of his acceptance of it—these were always to be consoling memories for Helen.

XXVI

BURIAL

THE excitement of Duncan's departure, Helen's pain at that moment of farewell, for a time had drawn Anne's mind from her own unhappiness. But when she had left the girl at Mrs. Easton's, and was back in her room at "Navarre," the realization of her position came upon her again with crushing force.

She leaned back in her chair, and stared at two lizards facing each other on the wall, their eyes un-winking. No longer than her little finger, and even more slender, fawn-and-white on back and breast, their tails tipped with black, they appeared to be but pictures of themselves, delicately painted on the darker background of the wall. Only the closest scrutiny could detect the pulse that beat in their throats. To stare at them seemed to help Anne in her effort to concentrate her mind. Were they not fit symbols of the inscrutable character of this tropical world?

After all—she thought—were honour and candour matters only of environment, environment not personal, not even social, but merely geographical? Somewhere she had read some such statement. Could it be true? And if true, then what of one's—of anyone's—personal responsibility?

Was it possible, on the one hand, that straightforwardness—as understood by Westerners—was only a resultant of snow-capped mountains and temperate valleys, of cleansing winter winds and frosts, of land-locked harbours, rivers of clear water, wholesome

breaths of resinous forests? And on the other hand, were impenetrable mangrove swamps, fevering inaccessible coasts, storms furious but without life, miasmic streams, a sun always shining, nature too opulent for vigour—were these things responsible for the mental obliquity, the moral lapses, of Orientals? To say so much was to say that the will itself was not free—that it was a slave to the accident of birth!

Then, as suddenly as if she had seen it flare out in letters of fire on the opposite wall, she understood that her horrifying antipathy to her husband was, at bottom, not because of his racial blood. It was because of the fatal difference in his point of view which his race made possible—nay, made inevitable.

That personal candour, imperative, unremitting, fearless, which was the heritage of her Aryan blood, was lacking in that of the Malay. Shades of meaning, infinite subtleties, refined variants, to her sophistical and abhorrent, were as natural and proper to him as thought and speech themselves. To him they were not shades or variants, but actualities as complete, as four-square, as any of her own. If she would be just, therefore, she must not judge Truth by her own light only, for her husband had a light of his own—the light of his own race—by which to judge.

It was not that by character and blood she was truthful, and by the same causes Dick was untruthful. The sword that lay between them was infinitely more deadly—Truth to him and to her was not the same!

Alan Crittenden had once hinted as much—not apropos of Dick, but in an endeavour to give her some apprehension of the native character. She remembered now the watchful gravity of his face as he talked.

Had he had her own case in mind, after all? Could he have been trying to fit her for the very revelation that had come to her! His warning, at their first meeting, that she might encounter social difficulties in Manila; his vigilant guard over her at the reception at Malacañan; the opinion of her husband she fancied she had read in his glance, at dinner only the night before—these and a score of other memories came to her mind. Yes, he had foreseen this very moment of her awaking!

All her life she had been taught to believe that Truth was precise, perfectly defined, exact as a geometric figure whenever and wherever it was found. "The naked Truth" expressed it—Truth single, glorious, immaculate, unashamed. Now she shrank appalled before the realization of the fact that Truth might not be unique, and even if it were not unique, it might still possess the virtues she had ascribed to it!

She had a vision of what had tormented the wise men of the earth for ages—perhaps had troubled the very sons of God before men were: "What is Truth?" She joined the cry of her soul to Pilate's.

A soft kick of a bare foot on the door preceded the appearance of her little Igorrote maid. She came in bearing biscuits and a pot of hot chocolate.

"Braulio say you had not breakfas', modham."

Anne watched absently while the maid rolled between her palms the wooden *molinillo*. The stick entered the pot by a hole through the silver top, and whipped the chocolate to a delicate fluidity. The muchacha—she had roamed wild the mountains of Benguet not two years before—poured the drink into

a Japanese cup, keeping shy and adoring eyes bent on her mistress the while.

“No more, modham,” she said when the cup was not much more than half full.

Half mechanically, Anne lifted the lid of the chocolate-pot, and peered within. It was still more than a third full.

“There’s plenty here, Alinga.”

The maid smiled tranquilly. “No more, modham,” she insisted.

Anne stared at her—then she understood. Whether Alinga thought that enough chocolate had been poured to satisfy her mistress’s proper needs, or whether she intended to use the residue in the pot for her own refreshment, was immaterial. The result was that from her point of view her mistress had been allowed enough, therefore there was no more. This was not deceit on her part—on the contrary, it was her statement of an indisputable fact!

Without resentment, Anne let her go. The “pad” of bare feet died away across the floor, while Anne brooded, her face drooping in her hand, her eyes fixed upon the crimson blossoms of the fire-tree outside her window.

Alinga’s statement, a matter in itself so homely and trivial, was an illustration of a fundamental difference between races, a difference which since history began had shaken the world, had brought forth wars of conquest and defence, racial hatreds, national tyrannies, diabolical revenges, social wrongs too deep to be remedied, too subtle to be defined.

So at last she could no longer flinch from admitting the hopelessness of her personal problem: her

husband and she thought in different terms—could never think alike, try as they might to do so. Even utter submission to duty would be of no avail. No amount of mutual forbearance, of earnest good-will, of affection—even if affection still existed between Dick and herself—could alter the habits of mind which race and environment had formed for them ten thousand years before they two were born. Dreadful and pitiable conclusion to all her agonizing!—but the truth!

Outside her window, a fairy-bluebird swung on a twig of the fire-tree, its plumage vivid among the red blossoms—like a patch of sky among sunset clouds. From a meadow a carabao, wallowing in a rain-water pool, sent up a delighted “woof” each time he plunged his nostrils beneath the water.

Along the street a native funeral procession passed.

In front blared a band, its members marching in prideful consciousness of ultramarine-blue uniforms and brass-topped helmets. Behind came four boys, bare-headed, their shock hair jutting about their ears, their bodies clad in short white cassocks, red petticoats reaching to their knees, and red-and-white striped trousers ending at their bare ankles. On their shoulders was an open catafalque. Upon it, under a salmon-coloured canopy adorned with gilt tassels, lay a little coffin roughly painted a brilliant pink. Such was the procession. Not a mourner followed in its train.

Anne knew that within those tiny painted boards lay all that was mortal of a Filipino child—born to ignorant care or no care at all, and fed upon rice-water and raw bananas until starvation overtook it. Now, its body was being carried away, to be sealed in a niche in the mortuary wall of Paco Cemetery.

So the procession—to an American mind so grotesque that it must be held either laughable or horrible, yet to a Malay's thinking natural and proper enough—passed out of sight.

Anne sank back in her chair. Outwardly her life must go on as usual. It must be lived somehow—somehow! She felt that at last she was able to see her way a little clearly. She thanked God for it.

Nevertheless, a moment or two later, when Alinga stole in to remove the chocolate things, she was astounded to find her mistress shaking with hardly repressed sobs.

“Ah, modham,” she said soothingly, mustering all her linguistic knowledge to express her sympathy. “It ees dat banda for de leetle dead bay-bay. Yes, it ees much sad for you.”

And Anne was able to repay her little maid by a grateful smile.

XXVII

DREAMS IN THE WILDERNESS

“TENIENTE,” said the sergeant of Constabulary, in what was almost colloquial English, “Teniente, this is the top of the hill, and the mango-tree makes it cool here. Shall you take siesta here?”

“All right, sergeant. It looks like a good place. Detail a guard over those cargadores, though. We don’t want to have any of them breaking away.”

Bustos saluted with a stiffness nicely calculated to convey to his officer that a veteran sergeant of Philippines constabularios needed no reminder of his duty in respect of such an elementary matter as the safeguarding of bearers.

Duncan grinned at him cheerfully, and sat down under a tree to eat his luncheon—hard biscuit and fresh mango, moistened by a hearty drink of boiled water from his canteen. When he had finished, he turned a pleased scrutiny on the scene about him.

To the south and west, far below—a vast emerald table crossed by a thin silver bar—lay the river-bottom along which they had journeyed for two days.

From Cottabatto on the estuary of the Rio Grande de Mindanao, a revenue cutter’s steam-launch had carried them the first stage of the way. They had steamed past miles of green rice-fields studded with bamboo watch-towers, where naked boys twitted drowsily at lines of jangling wire to scare the brown rice-birds from the springing grain. Along the river banks, brown-skinned girls bathed in coves carefully palisaded against caymans. Gold-and-green sunbirds flashed everywhere.

A giant india-rubber tree gave shade to a whole village or made the market-place for a district. In such a market, Moro mats in violent reds and purples and browns might have been purchased by an American; and other wares—softer and more rounded—have been delivered to one of the Faithful who knew the secret.

The declining sun had lighted Duncan and his men to the riverside stockade of Datto Parang, who entertained the officer with the steaks of the great sea-turtle, fried fish, venison cutlets, snipe stuffed with rice, papaya and mangosteens, sweetmeats and muddy coffee; and later provided him with matting and a mosquito-bar for the night.

The young officer might easily have been supplied with entertainment more Cyprian, but he met the datto's hints in that direction by such blank stares that the latter at last gave him up, dispensing a sidelong leer to Bustos, and a mutter in the vernacular to the effect that times had changed since the brave days when the Spaniards ruled the land. To which the Macabebe, who had known the river-country at that time, answered by a "seguro," and a half-contemptuous glance for the datto himself.

But that Duncan was not so obtuse as the Moro lord imagined may, perhaps, be indicated by an entry in that diary Bustos afterward brought to Major Crittenden.

"6th.—Stopped at Bambak for the night. Parang
bleary old ruffian. Remember to tell headquarters
good thing to keep eye on him. Besides, he's got
too many men hanging about—and too many new
rifles."

The next morning, evading the datto's inquiries as to the purpose of the expedition, the party proceeded up a tributary of the main river, being now forced to travel in canoes.

The day's journey was one long fight against the fierce current that cut the reedy banks, against natural rafts of driftwood, and masses of growing sedge. At times, the reeds almost met above their heads as they paddled and poled their way along the water-tunnels. The air was close and hot, opulent of midges, and smelt of mire and decaying vegetation.

Channels even narrower opened here and there—mere slits in the bulk of mud and grass, the black water speeding past noisome shores, and sucking about hidden roots. In such places ducks fed, deer came down to drink, and caymans lurked to engulf both when opportunity offered. At a spot where a tree overhung their heads, a python menaced the party—a monster such as Duncan had pictured in fevered dreams, ten yards in length and thicker than a man's thigh, hideous beyond belief of men who live in temperate zones.

In that marshy waste they saw but once other human beings than themselves—half a dozen broad-chested Maguindanaos, who swept a canoe past without lifting their heads from their paddles but with every pair of black eyes gleaming sidelong.

"Mountain men?" asked Duncan of Bustos.

"I think not, teniente," returned the sergeant, his face more than usually wrinkled in an effort of memory. "Parang's men—I think. That man with only one ear—some enemy swung a sharp barong

there!—I remember him. I think I saw him on this river years ago."

That night when they camped, sentries were carefully posted, for they were nearing a country where death lurked in every thicket, and was carried at every man's sash. Duncan's diary contains an entry which reveals his natural fitness for the service he had entered upon.

"7th.—Cleared the river-bottom about 5 P.M. Tried my new automatic pistol on a python to-day —it works first rate. Met six men in banca. Sergeant says some of Parang's crowd. They paid no attention to us. *Query: Wouldn't they, if they hadn't expected to see us?*"

It was this observation which later gave Crittenden the decisive clue to the events of that time.

The morning of the third day, leaving a strong guard for the canoe under command of the second sergeant, they began to ascend the long slopes of the mountain range. The path led them gradually upward through clumps of forest and rock, or across open plateaus where the cogon grass tossed its white plumes a fathom above their heads. As they went higher, the river marshes behind them seemed to contract and fall away as a moss-covered stone sinks into the gray depths of a well.

Now and then Duncan would mount a rock beside the trail, and let his little army file past him—Sergeant Bustos, wrinkled, keen-eyed, alert, his riot-gun in the hollow of his arm; then a score of the Constabulary; then a dozen Tiruray cargadores from the coast; a couple of Visayan hospital assistants; then another score of constabularios under Corporal For-

tunato. A long breath of satisfaction at the soldierly bearing of his men expanded the officer's lungs.

It was on the very crest of the ridge that they had halted for luncheon and siesta.

When his officer began to look about him, Bustos approached and pointed out over the mighty hollow, his hand as lean and delicate as an artist's. Before them, to the east and north, the whole world was a vast bowl of blue haze, white-plumed grasses, shadowy forests, lit here and there by the silvery star of a mountain lake.

"You see where the smoke is, teniente?—five kilometres down? Ran-nág!"

"That's our village, is it? Not much of a place. Well, we'll get there easily long before dark. You say the chief—Ali—won't know anything about our man?"

"He will say he does not, teniente. A Lanao never knows anything of another—when he is wanted by us."

"Hum-m! I suppose not." He was lost in thought a moment. Then he made an expansive gesture. "Look at all that. It looks like God's country—almost."

"Teniente?" asked the sergeant, for once at a loss in the intricacy of the English language.

"I say it looks like a good country to live in."

The veteran shrugged. "There must be many, many killings first, teniente."

"Oh, I hope not. When we've once made this fellow Otkiri see reason—or gotten rid of him, if we must—after that, may be this whole province will be quiet." His eyes kindled as he went on, more to himself than to his subordinate. "When settlers, real

American settlers, occupy all this, it'll be a real Promised Land—flowing with milk and honey. How would you like to end your days on a fine ranch down there, sergeant?"

"I have lived a soldier," said the Macabebe with decision. "I hope to die a soldier, teniente."

Duncan smiled at him with understanding, but continued to speak his thoughts aloud.

"If grass grows in this country like that, I believe wheat will. And oranges and apples? Why! California and Oregon and Idaho won't be in the same class. Yes, this *is* a white man's country."

He smiled on the infinite vista before him, as if he saw a snug homestead nestling among its own orchards and lawns.

"It's worth while—worth while," he said.

His hands clasped behind his head, he fell to dreaming.

XXVIII

DEER'S EYES

WHEN the heat of the day had passed, the column resumed its march, the trail leading downward by steeper slopes into the mountain-rimmed bowl that formed a world within a world. Before night-fall, they came safe to Ran-nág, the hamlet of the Panglima Ali.

The chief, a short, stout, round-faced Lanao, clad in skin-tight green trousers, loose purple jacket, and low-crowned turban none too clean, received Duncan with merry politeness. The Moro, although possessing many of the savage attributes of the North American Indian, has none of his chill dignity of demeanour. Rather, be he friend or enemy, he loves quirk and repartee, even physical frolic and horseplay, provided only no hand be laid on sacred hair or beard.

It was in this humorous spirit that Ali put his collection of rambling nipa huts at the American officer's disposal, his manner jocosely admitting his understanding of the fact that no other course lay open to him even were he so minded.

Duncan chose a hut a little apart from the others, commanding an unobstructed view over the wilderness below. This was cleaned out for his use, and thither the Panglima soon sent food to be cooked for his supper—the flesh of a very young kid, the inevitable chicken, ears of maize, yams, pomelos and mangosteens.

At his supper, on a sort of veranda where the

wind fanned him pleasantly, a silent Moro woman waited on his needs. By and by, feeling her eyes persistently upon him, he gave her a careless glance, looked again, and for the first time became aware that she was not the type of haggard crone usually detailed by a local chief to serve a male guest.

Duncan stared at her in frank admiration. She was a girl of no more than sixteen years. Her close-fitting crimson jacket and white *sarong* outlined her figure, slim and graceful. There was silver at her ears, encircling her neck, about her wrists and arms. A silver band held back the great braid of her hair. Her skin was a light brown, and her cheeks and nose were thin and delicately shaped as if an ancient strain of aristocratic Arab blood still persisted in her. Her mouth was small, and her lips were warmly red. Her teeth shone white and even, untouched by the stain of betel-nut.

But it was her eyes, which had first made Duncan conscious of her personality, that especially held him. They were large, and soft with the wild softness of a deer's, chestnut in colour, with now and then a curious fleck of red showing in their depths. In those eyes, as in her smile, hovered that pathos, that infinite pitifulness, of women who, whether in fact or in name, have always been slaves.

The loveliness of the girl whose hand his lips had worshipped a fortnight before, had broadened his heart to an understanding of all loveliness. So, from time to time, he smiled kindly at the Moro girl, and always her eyes met his, and his smile was returned, wistfully, faintly, almost appealingly, as one might return the smile of a young god.

After he had finished supper, he sent for the Panglima, and with Bustos to interpret whenever his own Spanish and slight knowledge of the vernacular should fail him, he began to explain his purposes.

Night had long since come. Before them, stars were suspended over infinite depths of valley. The cool wind of the hills drove a swarm of fireflies into a thicket and lit it with fairy candles until the breeze whirled them on again. From clumps of feather-bamboo, from the mango-tree beside the hut, went up the croaking of the lizards, notes mournful, harsh, heavy with the mysterious menace of the wilderness.

Duncan sat in his camp-chair, his pistol still buckled about his waist. Bustos stood near him, leaning on his repeating shotgun. A sentry had already worn a path around the hut, and four or five more men ceaselessly paced the bounds of the near-by camp. If the Panglima Ali, squatting at the officer's feet, understood these evidences of distrust, his fat and jolly face did not betray him.

"Panglima," said the young American, "everywhere in the world there are madmen. It is so in my country across the sea—it is so in yours. One of these madmen is named Otkiri."

Ali nodded and smiled, frankly interested—the lighted camp-lantern swung just over his head. Duncan went on.

"This man Otkiri's madness became so great that he killed men—beyond the mountains—about Lake Lanao. He and other men he has deceived into following him, have fled before the soldiers—there." His outstretched hand indicated the wilderness below. "Good! He fled, but he cannot escape the law. Sol-

ders hold all the trails that lead here from the great lake—Otkiri has not gone back by them since he first fled this way. Of that we are sure. Panglima, it is known to us that this Otkiri is somewhere near by—we have come to ask you to help us find him."

Silence followed, save for the ominous croaking of the lizards and the sighing of the wind across leagues of white-plumed grass. A falling star—red in the far spaces of the night—seemed to rebound from slope to slope of darkness until extinguished in the sheer depths of the valley.

Ali watched Duncan's boyish face.

"I am not a great man, teniente," he said. "I am a chief, but many a man who is not a chief has more carabao and more men than I. I have but ten men to obey my orders. Teniente, ten men might search from now until Ramazan yet they could not find in this country bad men who wish to hide."

The American smiled, but not merrily. Even his admiring sergeant was not certain that the hand which strayed to his pistol-butt did so of set purpose.

"It is many months yet to Ramazan, but what have we to do with that? In no more than three days' time—in three days, Panglima—your men must find where Otkiri hides."

Ali drew a leaf from his brass betel-nut box, laid in the leaf a slice of nut, another of lime, rolled all together, and slipped the compound between his blackened teeth.

"Very good, teniente. I will tell my men they shall be buried with a pig if they do not find Otkiri," agreed Ali jocularly.

After the chief had gone, soft-footed, across the meadow to his own hut, and Bustos had stretched him-

self on a mat before the door of the room where his officer was to sleep, Duncan sat a while, staring into the night. The music that rang in his heart found echo in the mandolin of one of his men who went past strumming softly.

“Buenas noches, teniente,” said the man respectfully.

“Buenas noches! Oh, is it you, Maximo? If you play your mandolin no more to-night, leave it with me.”

“Con mucho gusto, teniente.”

The constabulario, happy in the honour done him, delivered the instrument, touched his helmet, and left his officer to strum under the stars.

By and by, the idle striking of chords fell into a tune, and Duncan began to sing under his breath—the song dear to him because he had sung it to Helen, that night at “Navarre,” when her eyes had shone like half-hidden stars, and the breeze stirred her brown hair, and his heart fluttered in his throat.

“Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sip,
I would not change for thine.”

Did he hear a sigh? Or was it merely the sound of the wind in the grass? He looked down.

Under the lantern, the great braid of her hair cushioning her head against the bamboo railing-post, sat the Moro girl who had cooked and served his supper. Her eyes, large, and soft with the wild softness

of a deer's, were fixed upon him—her lips were a little parted.

Duncan put down his mandolin. "Hello, there, Fatima!" he said genially.

The girl smiled. "*Si, señor teniente.*"

"What! You don't mean to say I've hit it the first time? Is your name really Fatima?"

She understood only the repetition of her name. "*Si*—Fatima." She touched her bosom in affirmation.

"Well, well! It's a mighty pretty name. And you look the part—as if you'd come straight out of the Arabian Nights or Lalla Rookh." He guessed that she did not understand a word of English, and it amused him the more to talk to her. "I wonder if you know you're by long odds the prettiest thing in Mindanao."

"*Si, teniente.*"

"What!" he cried in dismay which changed to amusement as he realized that her assent was merely the formal submission made by a Moro woman to whatever the master male deigns to say.

"Did I draw you by the sound of my light guitar, Fatima? I never thought before that my musical ability was remarkably alluring. I didn't make the mandolin club at college, you know. Perhaps you'll play something yourself." He offered her the instrument.

She shook her head, smiling frankly up at him, and made a motion in return.

"Oh, you want me to oblige again? All right."

He lifted the mandolin to his knee, but paused to look at her.

Her head was thrown back against the post, and the braid of her hair, fallen now over her bosom, made

an ebon band across her crimson jacket, a band that rose and fell with the curves of her budding figure. Her eyelids drooped before his gaze.

“She can’t be the daughter of a common peasant,” he mused. “But she can’t be the daughter of rascally old fat-face, or she wouldn’t have been allowed to wait on me at supper—no, nor to be here now—a Mohammedan, too!” He stared at her. “By Jove! Hum-m!” His face grew almost stern, while she watched him intently. He drew a long breath, half angry, half perplexed. “This *is* a pretty country!”

“Teniente?” whispered the girl, softly and anxiously.

“Oh, I don’t suppose it’s your fault, Fatima. I know women are nothing but cattle down here. Nice sort of parent you have!”

He sat silent until he felt the girl’s hand laid timidly on his own. Then he drew his fingers across the strings of the mandolin, and began to sing:

“I sent thee, late, a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
And sent’st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.”

He ended, and still she sat watching him with her deer’s eyes—expectantly. When he had remained a long time without word or motion, smiling happily into the darkness, she realized that he had forgotten her existence.

After a while, her face bewildered, sad, even a little pitiful, she stole away.

XXIX

A FLAME TO TINDER

THAT night Duncan slept under a blanket, for the air was cool in the hills. When he awoke in the early morning, he wrapped the covering about himself, and ran down to a brook which had sung through his dreams all night long. Here he splashed gloriously in three feet of water. His powerful young body shone white and glistening and satiny.

At breakfast, Fatima was at his side to wait upon him. He returned her appealing smile by a cheery "Buenas dias!" and ate his meal with relish.

Then came Sergeant Bustos to make his morning report—and jolly, fat-faced Ali to say that long before dawn, trackers had been sent down the mountain to search for signs of Otkiri and his men.

His morning inspection of the Constabulary camp accomplished, there was little duty for Duncan to do. He had only to keep his men unceasingly ready and vigilant while he awaited the results of the efforts of the Panglima's henchmen. Somewhere in the tangle of lake and forest and haze—he was to suppose—the trackers were moving from hamlet to hamlet, making cautious inquiries of the inhabitants, or treading the narrow trails in hope to see the rising smoke or stumble upon the warm ashes which should betray the bandits' hiding-place.

Duncan had considered peremptory methods. A pistol held to Ali's head—a bayonet point at the hollow of his back—might possibly persuade him to lead

them straightway to the lurking outlaw. On the other hand, the Panglima really might be utterly ignorant of Otkiri's whereabouts. If so, no amount of violence could wring from him knowledge he did not possess, although it might wring a succession of choice lies. Furthermore, if Ali remained obstinately silent in despite of all threats, then the American officer's "face" would be lost irretrievably in the eyes of the Moros and even of his own men unless he carried to its deadly conclusion the implication of his threats. And this he could not do!

So, while Ali's trackers carried out their chief's orders, Duncan, prone on the veranda-floor of his hut, fountain-pen in hand, poured out from his heart many pages of that letter to Helen of whose contents no one besides herself ever knew anything, except the one paragraph that seemed to have a direct bearing on the stern business he was engaged in.

But it is easy to guess the tenor of what he wrote: Endearments in a "little language" lovers understand—lines of: "I remember how you looked at me that day," and "What did you think of me when I said," and "That was the night you wore a gown that was a sort of apricot or peach colour"—words of faltering lest he should have invested her parting exclamation with too deep meaning, lest he should be taking too much for granted—humble reflections on his own worthlessness and unfitness to have an angel at all interested in his welfare—fervent prayers that if it were by any chance true that the angel had meant to show her concern for him, she would continue to do so even when she should realize, as he was sure she

would, that he was not fit to worship her last year's shadow.

Then, too, there must have been tender orders that she should not worry about his safety—assurances that a man was as safe in the forest country of Mindanao as in the streets of Manila, safer for that matter, there being no automobiles or trolley-cars to dodge in the former place.

Lover's words a-plenty no doubt! But the one part of the letter which is known—reaching Crittenden through Anne Nelson—reads thus:

“ We spent six days in Cottabatto, getting together our cargadores—the Tirurayes don't like to venture among the Lanao people, you know—and studying maps of this Lanao country. I put in some hard digs at the dialect, too. By the way, I ran across Miguel Sanchez in Cottabatto. He's a queer chap—seemed rather to avoid me, although I was always nice to him about Manila. I suppose he was in Cottabatto on business, for I saw him on the dock pawing over hemp-bales.”

Letter-writing over for a time, Duncan strolled about the village, attended always by Bustos or Corporal Fortunato, or the constabulario, Maximo. On his approach, little naked children fell over each other in wild stampedes to their mothers, only to halt and stare wide-eyed at the Americano's ingratiating smile. Under the trees sat old men stolidly mumbling betel-nut. Old women pounded rice in mortars of iron-wood, their withered arms and bosoms glistening with sweat. From the pretence of seclusion afforded by the shadows of rude verandas, girls scanned the young man furtively.

At the steps of the largest hut, where the drowsing

Panglima scrambled up from his hammock to receive his visitor, Fatima passed him, her eyes lowered, her braid of hair swinging to her waist. She moved with the suppleness of a wild animal. The chief studied him as his glance involuntarily followed her gracefully swaying figure.

“She is my daughter, teniente. There is no prettier maid in the whole land of the Lanaos.”

“The beauty of the daughter is the glory of the father,” quoth Duncan; “If that be so, then surely the glory of Fatima’s father is great,” and Ali beamed, more satisfied than the other knew.

Luncheon and siesta came quickly enough, the latter devoted by Duncan not to sleep but to day-dreaming and to writing.

When the sun sank behind the ranges, the sky in the splendour of the brief afterglow was a pink haze—the mountains were carved in violet—and above their rim rose up a green moon. In the moonlight, the clusters of bamboo became torches of emerald fire.

The wilderness colours strangely harmonized with the crimson and white and silver of Fatima’s dress—she again served him at supper, with slow, gentle movements. Now and then her shoulder or arm brushed his as she bent to remove a dish. Once the strands of her hair fell across his neck, and glancing up at the soft touch, he saw that a faint red underlay the clear brown of her cheek.

The girl was as ignorant as only a Mohammedan woman can be, but subtle with the subtlety of her race and training, believing unquestioningly in the authority as in the passion of men. None the less, she liked kindness, although confusing it with weakness, and a man who smiled at her as Duncan did, instead

of in the fashion she was accustomed to, touched yet puzzled her exceedingly. Had her training permitted her to understand him sooner, she might have found means to prevent the further march of his column, or perhaps, in the last resort, to avert the consequences of that march. But Kismet! Doubtless the Mohammedan's creed of a Fate unswervable by the actions of puny mortals, gave her resignation afterwards.

So the day passed, and for Duncan, except for his letter-writing, it might have seemed wasted. But there was nothing to be done except to await the return of the trackers.

It is true that he might have led his constabularios to assist in the search, but to march at random in that vast wilderness was to run deadly risk of ambuscade. Masses of rock, thickets of bamboo, the very grass beside the trails, might prove a death-trap. A trailing vine might release the spring of a barbed arrow—the greenest turf conceal a pit made terrible with pointed stakes—the hollow of a pool hide a frenzied cobra held by a leash of rattan ready for its hideous duty.

Besides, there was nothing to be gained by such a random search. Beyond the mountains, toward Lake Lanao, detachments of the Army held the passes—behind him, a portion of his own company guarded the canoe, and so blocked the only other exit from the region, that by way of the river. There was nothing to do but wait.

When the Panglima came after supper to say that his trackers had found no trace of bandit Otkiri, Duncan betrayed no impatience. It was only what he had expected—he had allowed the chief three days!

XXX

FATIMA

AT Ran-nág, one day passed much like another, each producing a report of "nothing found" from the Panglima Ali, each marked by the presence of Fatima, each lit by hours of writing to Helen.

Toward noon of the third day, Duncan summoned Bustos, and strolled as usual to Ali's hut. He evaded the chief's offer of a seat, but drew out a cigarette, and leaned against a veranda-post, smoking tranquilly. The long eaves—the strips of thatch as brown and dry as tinder—extended above his shoulders, half hiding his boyish face.

Ali's jolly features beamed as he talked. "The teniente likes my country?"

"Much—very much. Surely, Mecca itself cannot be more beautiful."

"Only because the Prophet's bones lie there."

"True."

"My father was a *hadjí*—he visited Mecca. I, also, have often wished to go, but I have my daughter to think of first. And Mecca is far away."

"Yes, nearly a month's journey from here."

"Is your own country as large as this, teniente?"

"Many times larger."

The Moro suppressed an incredulous smile. "But your women are not so beautiful as Maguindanao women. This I know. I have seen American women at Cottabatto, and once even at Zamboanga, for I have traveled so far. Your women are too pale and thin,

and there are not enough of them. It is certain, also, that an American can have but one woman in his own country because there are so few to be had. And yet women are greatly to be desired, is it not so, teniente?"

"Some women, certainly, Panglima."

The chief leaned forward, a sudden gleam in his black eyes, "Teniente, who would not fight for the woman he desires! It is said that Otkiri killed a man on account of a woman—would you blame him for that?"

The young officer's heart leaped in his throat. For the first time he was certain of that which hitherto he had only guessed—that Ali knew the murderer Otkiri, was in communication with him, was aware of his hiding-place at that very moment. Duncan prayed that his own face might look as bland as the Moro chief's.

"I blame no man for what he may do, Panglima. It is only my duty to find him, and bring him before the wise men of the law who know how to fix the blame. I must do this with Otkiri."

"But he fought for a woman, teniente—so it is said. Think! You yourself are a young man—is not the blood hot in your veins?"

"That is no matter. Otkiri must face the wise men of the law. Besides, he has killed more than one man—has all been done for a woman?"

"One killing leads but to another, teniente, until behold! the list is long, and the soldiers hunt Otkiri as one hunts a wild boar." Ali chewed his betel-nut regretfully. "The jungle is wide—I do not believe my men can find him, teniente."

"It is the third day, but the sun has not yet set," returned Duncan calmly.

The hand that was holding the cigarette rested a moment on the slender pole to which the thatch of the eaves was bound. As if by magic, the tinder-dry thatch flared up! Ali bounded to his feet, but meeting Bustos' coldly-glittering eyes, hung quivering. One instant a jet of flame flashed four inches high—the next, Duncan's sweeping hand extinguished it.

He turned to Ali smiling, deprecating his awkwardness. "It is safe now, but I must take more care. But how unfortunate for you that the house should be so dried by the sun that even a cigarette-end may light it easily. And the wind is always blowing here. The other houses of Ran-nág—all of them—would burn like torches, without doubt. Truly, I must warn all my men to take great care. Panglima, the sun has not yet set—I hope to hear good news of Otkiri to-night."

Duncan did not look back at Ali as he swung away, but Sergeant Bustos, following his officer, could not deny himself that satisfaction.

That night, after supper, Fatima lingered until Ali came. He ensconced himself on the veranda's edge—the girl at his feet—and fell to preparing his betelnut as cheerfully as if he were not aware that the sentries about the camp had been doubled, and that Maximo was lounging beside the hut, his rifle across his knees.

The moon, rising clear of the hills, changed from green to red, and from red to golden, and so remained, a gigantic jewel pendant in the void. The tops of the cogon grass bent before the night breeze like the helmet crests of an innumerable host advancing to the charge. From the vast spaces of the wilderness came up sounds, faint, unnamable, restless with the mystery of the night and of the morrow.

During the talk that followed, Fatima's eyes, the colour of chestnuts, a curious fleck of red far within, were lifted from time to time to Duncan's face—a faint red continually underlay the clear brown of her cheek. Now and then her lips moved, but without sound, as if her heart were trying to express what her voice could not, pleading with him for his own sake—and it might be for hers.

“Teniente,” Ali began, “to-day we spoke of women.”

Duncan wondered what new plea was about to be presented on behalf of Otkiri. “It may be, Panglima,” he conceded with caution.

“Women were made for men, teniente. Is it not so even in your country?”

“Wise men in my country have said that no man's life is complete without a woman.”

“Ah! Your wise men said well! This, then, I have to say to you, teniente. Here is my daughter, Fatima. You have told me that you think her fair. If you desire her, why should you not have her? Take her for yourself!—she herself is willing. She is yours for as long as you choose to stay at Ran-nág. When you go, take her with you or leave her behind, as you may choose. Take her now to your house here, teniente. I give her to you. Take her—and think no more of Otkiri.”

In that land, the boy had already learned to smile even when his soul revolted within him. He was able to do so now, while his mind turned and turned the Moro's words.

Ali must be bound to Otkiri by unbreakable chains of kinship or fear—or was it by some great bribe?—else he would never have made such an offer. Did he

have in mind experiences of old-time Spanish days that he could hope to purchase immunity for Otkiri—to secure the abandonment of the hunt for the many-times murderer—by so damnable a method as he had proposed? Did he, savage that he was, imagine that the American officer actually would renounce duty and honour at the lure of a dusky cheek and lithe body? Duncan choked a little at sudden memories of Helen, exquisitely lovely, and kind!

Yet the offer had been made, and must be treated with respect, even with caution. It would not do to arouse the personal pride of the Panglima lest he should become a tiger on the instant, and so all Duncan's plans be frustrated. Besides, there was the girl herself—slender, smooth-cheeked, yielding—he would give much not to wound her.

"Panglima," he said, "to-day you yourself remembered that in my country there is but one woman for one man. But it is not so much because women are few as because with us Allah so makes a man that he loves only one woman—and her he loves his whole life through. It is thus with me. Far away from here I have found the woman Allah has given command that I should love. I have spoken to her, and now the command of honour as well as of Allah holds me to her. Fatima is beautiful to see, and her voice is like music, but—my thanks to you, and to her—but she cannot be for me."

The girl's hand suddenly covered her eyes. Her breast was as motionless as if no breath would ever lift it again. The moon laid a shining finger across the braid of her hair, and beyond, touched the barong at Ali's girdle. The hilt of the great knife—a boar's tusk set in silver—gave back glimmers of light.

Duncan broke the long silence. His voice, lately winningly gentle, now rang cold. "Panglima, the three days have passed. You have found the place where Otkiri hides?"

Ali glanced from the officer's steady eyes to the figure of Bustos standing behind him, his riot-gun in the hollow of his arm. He began to compound his betel-nut.

"By the blessing of Allah, yes, teniente. My men have found him."

"A—ah!" Over his shoulder Duncan exchanged glances with his sergeant. "Good, Panglima! Where?"

As nonchalantly as if he were not aware that the preservation of his village—from the besom of fire—and the maintenance of his own freedom depended upon his words, the Moro told how one of his trackers had ferreted out the outlaw's place of refuge, ten miles from Ran-nág toward the east and north—"in an old stone fort behind a palisade, teniente, in a place where many bamboos grow." That very afternoon, Ali's henchman had made the discovery, and had effected his retreat without detection by the bandits. He estimated Otkiri's force at a round dozen warriors, armed with knives and spears.

"Without doubt, Otkiri will fight, teniente. And he has an *anting* that turns aside bullets. More than once the spirit has saved him."

"If Otkiri fights, he dies," said Duncan quietly, "and his magic with him."

"Teniente, my man shall guide you to-morrow, if you still wish it." Ali finished his tale with the air of one who washes his hands of the whole matter.

Duncan consulted his sergeant in English, then turned again to the Moro. "Not to-morrow, Panglima, but to-night. We must strike Otkiri at dawn. Let your man be ready at three hours before."

"I myself will wake to see you start, teniente."

Fatima went with him as he went, soft-footed, across the meadow.

When Duncan had gone the rounds of the camp, and given the necessary orders, he made his way back to his hut to snatch what sleep he could. As he was mounting the steps, a soft voice murmured at his shoulder.

"Teniente?"

"Fatima!"

The girl's hand touched his an instant, then pressed the palm of it to her cheek. Her eyes implored him.

So they stood for a long moment. Then she saw that in his face which made her turn slowly away. But—impelled by who knows what generous devotion!—suddenly she faced again toward him.

"Teniente!"

In that tone, if he could but have read it, lay a woman's surrender of all secrecy of training, her repudiation of all malevolence of race. Revelation lay close behind those eyes, soft with the wild softness of a deer's. But lack of a common language—the girl's extraordinary beauty—even, by a peculiar jest of the gods! his worshipping thought of Helen—held the revelation from him.

She made a wavering gesture, expressive of utter helplessness, of infinite contrition for what must come. She put both hands over her face, and went falteringly down the pathway into the night.

XXXI

THE AMBUSCADE

IN the dew-dripping blackness of the tropic night, the column stood ready to march.

The score or more of little constabularios who had been detailed to go—the remainder being left to guard the camp—leaned on their rifles in profound silence, save when a sigh of eagerness and expectation escaped from one or another.

The moon had sunk behind the mountain—even the stars were hidden in the haze that enveloped the wilderness. From all sides, the croaking of the lizards went up toward the hidden stars—a witches' chorus, palpitant, boding, alert for whatever tragedy men's passions might present.

In the halo of a lantern, Duncan, Sergeant Bustos, Corporal Fortunato, Maximo, and Panglima Ali, stood together. By that wan light Duncan's boyish face looked older and more hardened—the lines about Bustos' eyes and temples made him sinister and very grim—Ali's glancing black eyes gave a foreshadowing of uneasiness to his jolly face.

Duncan motioned toward the head of the column where Ali's tracker stood between two veterans.

“Panglima, you say that your man knows the way, but how are we to be sure that he will guide us straight?”

“It is easy to be certain, teniente. He will guide you straight unless he goes mad, and I will tell you, so that he cannot lead you astray, even if madness

seizes him." He spread his hands. "See, then! Otkiri hides yonder—down the mountain a league to the great rock; thence to the left hand, to the two huts beneath one narra-tree, above the path; thence east and north again, through the cogon to the cotta among the feather-bamboos."

"You know this old fort well, then?"

"Very well, teniente. It was my father and the chiefs, his friends, who built it many years ago, that they might fight the Spaniards. I myself have hunted deer about it many times."

The young officer's eyes swept his ready group of men, then came back to the chief.

"Panglima, since you know the place well, you, too, shall guide us."

Ali's hand clutched the hilt of his barong. For an instant he stood, with that immense rippling of muscles under the skin that a deer shows when about to launch himself into space. For an instant, the yawning muzzle of Bustos' riot-gun in front, the leveled bayonets of Fortunato and Maximo on either side, seemed barriers too slight to stay his maddened bound.

Then that deadly rippling vanished so utterly it might have been thought a fancy. By the light of the lantern, Ali was seen to smile.

"As you wish, teniente," he said.

They began to march.

Duncan led the way down the mountain trail. His holster-flap was buttoned back, and his right hand was on the butt of his automatic pistol. At his heels followed Maximo, and behind Maximo, the Panglima, carrying the lighted lantern carefully in the crook of

his arm. He knew that if the light wavered, or advanced too quickly, or went out, Bustos would discharge a load of buckshot into his spine.

The dew-drenched grass slipped from Bob's leather puttees, and wet his uniform almost to the armpits. But happiness was in his heart—soon he would be taking part in his first battle, even although that battle must be a small one. He had no expectation that Otkiri, a man with the rope about his neck, would surrender without a struggle.

Every brave man goes joyfully into his first battle. Afterward he may fight in a hundred battles, gallantly, willingly, even cheerfully, but never again with joy.

But now Duncan pressed happily on. He had taken every precaution to ensure success that he could think of. Particularly, his reason and Bustos' approval told him that in the seizure of Ali at the last moment, he had hit upon the best means to prevent treachery, if it had been in any way intended. The issue—as he thought—was now on the knees of the gods. He could do no more.

Eyes and body were intensely alert, yet he hummed a tune under his breath as he walked. His thoughts became curiously blended of the words of the song, of the face, the gestures, the smiles of Helen, and of the plans, stratagems, chances of war. Now and then, the deer's eyes of Fatima seemed to implore him from the cogon grass.

After an hour or more of marching, they reached the great rock, and turning to the left, skirted the rolling plain at the foot of the hill.

They had made good progress, but either there

had been misinformation as to the distance or else the watches of both Duncan and his sergeant were at fault, for before they reached the second landmark—the two huts under the narra-tree—the white dawn was creeping into the valley. On all sides objects became visible: the rocks, the plumes of the grass, and soon the narra-tree, but not the two huts, for the tree stood a little off the trail, and the huts were hidden by the tremendous buttress-like roots.

Near by, where the trail turned across the rolling plain, Duncan came to a halt. At his signal, Bustos and Maximo approached, the former driving Ali before him. The lantern on the chief's arm was still lit—no one bothered to blow it out.

“It's nearly daylight, sergeant. The sun will be up before we can reach Otkiri's cotta, but it seems to me the only thing to do is to go on. What do you think?”

“I think so, also, teniente,” agreed the Macabebe. “Maybe Otkiri will sleep late—we may yet surprise him.”

Panglima Ali spoke for the first time since the march had begun. “Teniente, why not ask the people who live in the huts there, if they have seen any strange men about?”

Throughout the expedition Duncan had displayed none of the fear of ridicule which so often deters the brave yet inexperienced soldier from taking proper precautions in the field. Nor had the veteran Constabulary sergeant allowed his well-founded confidence in his own military prowess to blind him to that of the enemy. But be he ever so vigilant, there come times

in the life of every soldier—as of every other man—when senses are dulled and precautions overlooked.

To both the officer and his subordinate, Ali's suggestion seemed natural enough, and one to be adopted.

"You stay here, sergeant," directed Duncan. "Maximo and I and the Panglima will go up to the huts, and find out what we can."

Without more ado, keeping Ali a step in front of them, they turned off the trail, tramped the few yards up the slope, and rounded the narra-tree.

Two ragged huts sat in a clearing in the cogon grass. They had no windows, but doubtless their many cracks served as well. The mat-door of each was carefully closed, as if against the dampness of the night. A Moro, naked to the waist, sat on the top step of the nearest hut. He betrayed no surprise at seeing them, but stared in sullen apathy.

The screen of narra roots and the gigantic cogon shut the clearing from the world. No sound came from anywhere—even the lizards had suddenly hushed their croaking. The first rays of the rising sun touched the grass-plumes, turning their pearl to amber. The lantern on Ali's arm showed a sickly yellow.

"Panglima," ordered Duncan, "ask the man if he has seen strange hunters from the north or east, last night or this morning."

Without the slightest warning, Ali uttered a loud shout. With a motion too quick for the eye to follow, he struck furiously backward at Duncan with his sheathed barong. The keen and heavy blade, bursting the thongs that held the halves of the sheath together, laid open the American's hip. Even as he shouted

and struck, Ali leaped forward and crouched to the ground.

On the instant, half a dozen rifles roared from the huts. Shot through and through, Duncan reeled, but was caught by Maximo from behind. He lurched toward Ali.

Falling, his indomitable hand plucked his pistol—a stream of bullets shattered Ali's fat and jolly face.

"Helen—"

Over him from the huts poured a dozen bandits, their terrible knives hacking at him and at Maximo who, clubbed rifle in hand, raved above his officer.

Bustos and the corporal appeared suddenly from behind the narra-tree. Holding themselves aloof, they began to fire with incredible speed and accuracy.

The cluster of bolomen withered before that blast. Otkiri, whirling his kris, rushed on Bustos, who at two paces tore open the murderer's stomach with buckshot. The Macabebes continued to fire—the old sergeant's teeth showing in a hideous snarl. Some of the outlaws ran toward the shelter of the grass—none reached it.

Against Ali's twitching foot, the lantern still flickered.

But the boy lay in the trail, on his face the look of the boxer, that look a little pathetic which says: "You may strike me, but you cannot force me to stop smiling!"

XXXII

MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS

IT was Sergeant Bustos, standing very straight in the shadowed sala at "Navarre," who told the story of Duncan's death.

Helen March lay in a lounging-chair, very quiet, her eyes shining as she gazed steadily before her. Anne sat near, her hand hanging close to Helen's, that the girl might clutch it for comfort when she wished. Crittenden stood at the window, his back toward the others, as straight and motionless as the sergeant himself.

Dick sat at his desk with folded arms and bent head, listening attentively. When he had learned from Anne that Bustos was to tell his story that morning, he asked that he might be present. The request was natural enough—Duncan had been one of his friends at college, although one by no means so intimate as Anne imagined. He was genuinely grieved by Bob's death—a matter of which he had had no forewarning.

The news of the skirmish with Otkiri's band had reached Constabulary Headquarters three weeks before; Anne had broken it to Helen the same day.

Now the outward demonstration of the girl's grief was over. Indeed, the fact that no one besides the Eastons and Anne and Crittenden knew of the affection that had existed between herself and the dead boy, made it impossible for her to betray her grief, and served as a wholesome restraint even on its inner indulgence.

But when she had learned that the sergeant who had taken command after her lover's death, and had so well avenged him, was come again to Manila, she had begged to hear the whole story from his own lips.

Bustos told his tale with stern simplicity, but perhaps not with all the naïveté that the two women supposed—for he well remembered that the girl lying back so quietly in the long chair was the “*pequeña señorita*” to whom his officer's farewell had been made when the transport sailed.

“My teniente was brave, and he was good,” said Bustos as he drew to an end. “He died a brave man, and he lived a good one.” His wrinkled face inclined ever so little toward the lounging-chair. “There was a girl at Ran-nág—the daughter of the Panglima. I never saw such a beautiful girl among the Moros before. She had the body of a wild-cat, and eyes like a deer's. She was sick with love for the teniente—yes, and her father offered her to him—but he would not have her. I think he loved someone else, because he cried out a woman's name as he died, and it was not the name of the Holy Mother.”

Helen turned softly on her side, then lay very still. There was a long silence in the room.

“Does the Major wish anything more?” asked Bustos at last.

“Nothing more, sergeant.”

The Macabebe saluted, but Helen, turning as he passed her, held out her hand.

“Thank you.” It was hardly more than a whisper.

The veteran understood. He took her hand respectfully in his own slim fingers, hesitated, then pressed his other palm upon it.

"God be with you, *señorita*," he said.

He saluted again, and tramped stiffly down the stairs.

Dick was the first to speak. "Ah, too bad! too bad! What a pity!" He rose, gathering some papers together. "I must be going back to my office. Won't you have a lift, Major? My runabout's outside."

Crittenden turned slowly toward him. "Thank you, yes—if you can circle so as to drop me at Miguel Sanchez' house. I've a little business with him."

"You're more likely to find him in his office at this hour."

"No. I've tried there already. He's at his house, I think."

"Sanchez is always willing to talk business," said Dick, his quick glance searching the other with a sudden fear, "even with a Constabulary officer, no doubt."

"No doubt," returned Crittenden carelessly.

"Come along, then."

When the two women were left alone, Helen pressed Anne's hand against her hot cheek. "You're so good to me, Anne dear."

"Poor child! What a sad story for you to hear!"

"Oh, I'm so glad I heard it—every word. A—ah! to think he died—thinking of—me."

"Yes."

"Anne, that girl—the one who——"

"Major Crittenden says her name is Fatima—according to the sergeant."

"Yes, Fatima! Do you suppose—she really loved him?"

"After her fashion—as she understands love—yes, I've no doubt of it."

"Then why didn't she save him?" demanded the girl with sudden fierceness.

Anne smoothed her hair. "Poor child! Perhaps she tried. We can't know—now."

When Helen spoke again her voice was very gentle.

"What became of her, do you know? I'd like to do something for her."

"I'm afraid there isn't anything you can do. But Major Crittenden would know."

"The sergeant said she had a body as graceful as a wild-cat's!" She caught her breath. "But *he* wouldn't—he didn't—Bob! Oh! Oh, Anne!"

She buried her face in her hands, and Anne could only smooth her hair again. After a while the girl gave a long sigh.

"You're such a comfort, Anne."

"You've been a comfort to *me*, dear, since—since Dick and I—"

"Are things still the same?"

"Yes, the same. I'm afraid they'll never be any different."

"Anne, I wonder if I may ask you something."

"You're the one person who may."

"Well—if he hadn't deceived you about it could you forget—the thing itself?"

"I think I could. I'm sure I could ignore it. But don't you see?—the one thing *is* the other in his case."

Cries in childish trebles, the squeals of a pig, the yapping of a puppy, and the laughter of muchachos, arose in a chorus from the patio, and drew the two friends to the window.

In the patio, Tomboy and Buddo were playing at

leapfrog, Puppy-Scout and Pig-Scout doing duty as the jumping-posts.

Puppy-Scout played his part well enough, for although nearly split with barking, his delirious joy in the game showed itself otherwise only by turning him about wildly in one spot. This sort of whirling immovability was surmounted, not easily to be sure, but still triumphantly, both by Tomboy and Buddo.

In the case of Pig-Scout, however, matters proved very different—for as Buddo approached him on a tottering run, Pig-Scout shamefully bolted from his appointed place. Buddo, lunging at him manfully, clutched nothing, and tumbling heels over head, sat down with a heavy thump!

The two women at the window gasped. Even the servants below fell silent before the expected wails.

Buddo's features worked. He drew a long breath—but still the outburst did not come. Tomboy drew near, her finger in her mouth, her chin trembling with sympathy.

“Aren't—aren't you goin' to *cry*, Buddo-Scout?” she quavered.

The little fellow blinked. He stiffened himself, and touched his half-naked chest with pride.

“American!” he said in his childish sing-song. “Americans don't cry. Buddo—American!”

“Oh! the darling!” cried Helen. She leaned from the window. “Braulio! Tiburcio! O Anne, may I tell them to get something for him? Braulio, give Buddo some cake and soda-water, and candy, if you've got it. Yes, both the children, of course.”

Muchachos and children straggled joyously away

toward the kitchen. Helen turned to find Anne staring after them.

"Did you hear what he said?" Anne asked.
"Buddo—is he a mestizo?"

"Yes. I thought you knew it. Isn't he brave!
And he can't be more than five or six years old."

"There were red marks under his poor little shirt
—real welts!"

"I saw them, too. That horrid Chinaman he lives
with must have been whipping him again. Tomboy
says he does whip him often."

"Horrible! Can't it be stopped? He's nothing
but a baby. And—he's half an American!"

"Captain Easton says the Chinaman, Fong, is his
legal guardian, and nothing can be done unless the—
the brute endangers Buddo's life. But I *know* he
hasn't any right to him. I think Major Crittenden's
trying to do something about it now. But you know
what these cases usually are—if one looks into them
too far."

Anne paled—the words touched her own wound.
"Oh, yes, yes. I wish *I* had never known."

"Where will it all end, Anne?"

"End? I don't know—I don't know! If I could
only see a little way! But I can't. I just live a day
or two at a time." Her smile was a little pitiful. "But
there's no use in grieving. I'm happy enough ordi-
narily. I suppose I'm getting used to the—to the idea
of things."

"Things!" said Helen indignantly.

"Don't, dear. Besides, there are other things—
about Dick—I don't understand. Things that worry

me. But never mind!—I'm not going to talk about myself any more.”

Helen sighed. “After all, I wonder if it isn't the fault of the tropics. They make one do only what one wants to do. The senses are the most important things here. Somehow other things don't seem to count.” Her head drooped. “It's easy to philosophize, isn't it? But when you think of what used to be—with Dick—and I think of what might have been—with Bob— Oh! it hurts!”

XXXIII

A FREE-HAND MAP

WHEN Dick Nelson had left him at the Sanchez house, Crittenden banged the gong in the entrada until a servant came and carried up his card. To his surprise, however, it was Señora Sanchez who received him in the sala.

She was clad in flaring colours in respect of skirt and camisa, and having been taken by surprise, had not had time to don shoes and stockings. A well-shaped instep, and heel of a creamy brown, showed from the native sandal.

She shook hands archly. "Major Crittenden, you mus' preten' to be happy wis' poor leedle me—Don Miguel has fevair and headache." She tapped her fan against her white teeth, and lit her black eyes at him. "I know you are disappointed, because you are so unkin' that you do not like me very much. I do not know why!"

"Who could help liking an angel in Paradise, señora? If you had said I *fear* you, I might say 'yes' to that."

"Ah, you laugh at me, and I—I am so much een airnes'! You nevair come to see me, although I am 'at home' de *primero*—de firs' of every mons'!"

"I lose many pleasures because I'm a busy man. In fact, I have so much business on my hands that I must ask Don Miguel to do me the favour to receive me now."

"Den it ees true—you are really so soon tired of

poor leedle me!" She eyed him reproachfully over her fan.

"One never tires of beautiful things, señora. But I really must see Señor Sanchez."

She saw he was not to be diverted by coquetry. "He has fevair, Major Crittenden—yes, and headache, also. He has been working so hard—dis politics, you know. I am sorry he ees not able to see you."

"I must trouble him for a few minutes, señora."

"It ees imposseeble, my frien'."

"I hope not for me." He gave her a keen glance. It was evident that the Assemblyman was trying to avoid him, but how much did Donna Bella know of her husband's plans and character? Probably she was merely acting under orders. He leaned toward her. "I will confide in you, señora. Don Miguel has his enemies—what great man has not?" He paused impressively. "Well, then, I have been able to learn something most important for him to hear at once."

Her resigned shrug lifted the piña kerchief about her plump shoulders.

"Ah, eef it ees politics, I s'all tell heem he mus' come. Wait a moment only, Major Crittenden." On the point of vanishing behind the screen of an inner room, she looked back, pouting. "S'all you not come to see poor leedle me, one day?"

Left alone, Crittenden gazed about, for it was the first time he had ever been in this house. The sala was large and cool and agreeably dark, opening at one end on a patio and at the other on a garden. The high backs of heavy chairs of claret-red tindalo wood added to the shadows of the room.

In one corner was a badly-executed picture of the

Crucifixion, in a frame of mother-of-pearl. Near-by hung the ubiquitous likeness of the patriot Rizal, the high cheekbones, unshapely ears, and negroid lips and nose, disguising the lofty spirit and serene soul.

On the opposite wall, an array of spears and knives—convex barongs, wavy-edged krisses, two-handled campilans—was set about a coat of Moro armour quaintly fashioned of plates of carabao-horn.

Between the windows hung a sort of box, eighteen inches square. This had a glass front which disclosed to view a papier maché image of the Virgin in repose against a pink satin background. Spread over the satin like strips of torn tapestry were a dozen long locks of hair—black, blue-black, gray, yellowish-white, white—cherished relics of relatives and friends now in Paradise.

A carefully-closed cabinet, the frames of its glass doors veneered with strips of turtle shell, held a few books—“Don Quixote,” in Spanish, and Rizal’s “Noli Me Tangere” and “El Filibusterismo”; Shakespeare’s Complete Works, in English; “Wilhelm Tell,” in German; Montaigne’s Essays, in French; Thomas Aquinas’ “Summa Theologiae,” in Latin. None of the volumes of this polyglot library showed any signs of use. Even Rizal’s novels looked uncut.

In the middle of the room, a spindle-legged table supported a confused heap of paper, pens, and ink-wells, and an open bookkeeper’s ledger as if someone had lately been engaged in balancing an account.

When Sanchez emerged from behind the screen of the inner room, Crittenden was sitting with his hands outstretched on the arms of his chair, his head against its high back, almost as one who sleeps.

"Good-morning, Major Crittenden!" cried Sanchez in Spanish. "Pardon my costume, if you please. What! Is it possible no one has yet brought you whiskey and soda! Ah, these servants are all mad. Mariano! Mariano!"

In spite of the other's protests, the Filipino was not content until whiskey had been set out, and bubbles of soda were soaring in a glass of ice. Nevertheless, his visitor shook his head.

"Thank you—I won't drink just now. I came on business only. I'm sorry to have to disturb you when you are indisposed."

The deputy rather hurriedly put his hand to his forehead. "Yes, yes,—a little fever. But it is nothing. A wife, you understand, makes much of a husband's slight illnesses."

Indeed, his clear eyes, and his skin's healthy brown gave no indication of suffering. The kimono enwrapping his slight body might have betokened nothing more than preparation for an ante-luncheon siesta.

Crittenden's deep-set blue eyes gazed mildly at his host. The somewhat too stern cast of his nose and chin was softened by the boyish curves of his hair, thick and close-cropped.

"I want to talk over with you a bill you've introduced in the Assembly, Don Miguel—your bill for increasing the taxation on the people of the provinces."

"Ah, I beg your pardon!" exclaimed the Filipino. "My measure is not for increasing the taxes. That is only an incident. It is for equalizing them—a very different matter! Its title makes the fact clear: 'An Act for the Equalization of Taxes in All the Provinces of the Philippine Islands.'" He gave his caller a sharp

but smiling glance. "You come to me from Government, perhaps?"

"I have come to see you at my own suggestion. I believe your bill is ill-advised. It's certain to produce unfortunate results. I want to ask you to withdraw it."

"Withdraw my measure?"

"Yes."

The Assemblyman was watching him through half-closed eyes—the tips of his thumb and forefinger touched the ends of his moustache.

"What then does Government propose to me, Major Crittenden?"

"I think I mentioned that I've come to talk over this matter on my own initiative. I'm deeply interested in the welfare of the Philippines, and I do not believe in this bill."

Sanchez flung out his hands. "But, my friend, have not *I* the welfare of the Filipino people at heart? —I for whom a part of that people has exercised its glorious right of suffrage by designating me to represent it in the National Assembly? Assuredly—oh, assuredly! It is precisely because I hold so dear this welfare that I have introduced my very beneficial measure for equalizing taxes."

The other's eyes held Sanchez' own a little more persistently.

"With all deference to your well-known ability as a disinterested statesman, Don Miguel—" the Assemblyman bowed with a smile and deprecatory gesture—"I have the same objections to your bill as have been aired from time to time in the local newspapers. You've seen them, no doubt."

"Ah, the newspapers, Major! They are all alike—American, Spanish, Filipino—they are all alike!" He snapped his fingers and protruded his lip in the characteristic Filipino gesture of contempt.

Crittenden went on steadily. "One of the chief objections is that the present revenues of the Islands are already sufficient to do what is absolutely necessary to do. And another is that the peasants of the provinces haven't the money to pay twenty pesos a year per capita—that's your minimum, isn't it? Therefore, such a law not only would be unreasonable, but it actually would be impossible to carry it out."

"I think not, señor."

"If your bill should become a law, Don Miguel, the Constabulary would have to be put into the field to enforce it, for there would be ladronism, uprisings, even possibly a civil war. I don't want to see any more fighting here. We have enough with ordinary bandits, as matters stand. You may remember young Duncan was killed only a few weeks ago in Mindanao—about the time you were there, Señor Sanchez."

"Yes, yes, I remember. It was a pity! But you go too fast, Major Crittenden. My measure has not yet become a law. The National Assembly in its wisdom may refuse to give its sanction to my proposal."

"Others value your influence more truly than you do yourself. What Don Miguel Sanchez proposes to the Assembly is almost certain to receive its approval."

Again the Filipino smiled and bowed. Crittenden went on. "The introduction of this bill has already stirred up uneasiness in the Mountain Province, in Cavite, in Negros Oriental, in Samar, and above all, in Mindanao. If the mere rumor that such a measure is in

Committee—in *your* Committee, Don Miguel—if the rumor creates so much uneasiness, what won't debate on the floor of the Assembly do! Not to speak of its passage, even if the Commission and the Governor-General decline to concur!"

Sanchez rose, and began to pace the floor, one hand behind his back, the other, when not devoted to a gesture, given to throwing back his over-long hair. Crittenden, who had seen him on the floor of the Ayuntamiento, recognized his best oratorical manner—the present effect a little diminished by his flapping kimono.

"Of course, Major Crittenden," he began. "I do not believe in the validity of your objections. Government needs more money for many things—for irrigation, for roads, for public buildings, for markets among the wild tribes, for steamship lines—oh, for many, many things! And if it is true that there are taos who cannot pay Government a tax of twenty pesos a year because they have no money, then let them work ever so little and earn it."

He paused, faced about, tossed his long hair with a quick jerk of the head. "Do not you Americans continually ridicule the Filipino people because they are so lazy—justly ridicule them, also, sometimes? Yes, yes. This, then, is one of the most statesmanlike thoughts of my measure—the taos will be forced to work, whether or not they desire to do so. What else are peasants fit for? They have no culture, surely. Then let them labour in the rice-fields as they ought, and so prevent that tiresome cry almost every year: '*No rice! No rice! Let Government buy rice for us or we starve!*' Is it not ridiculous, this cry, when the soil is the richest in the whole world? You say there

may be disturbances over this law, but is it not right that those who break the law should themselves be broken?"

Crittenden nodded gravely. "Yes, those who break the law must themselves be broken! But if this proposed law of yours even comes up for public discussion, the industry of the Islands will be set back a thousand times more than any conceivable increase in revenues could ever compensate for."

"Ah, that is but an opinion, Major Crittenden—and I, the author of the measure, do not agree with that opinion. We have survived the rinderpest among the cattle, the cholera among the people, and before that the war. We have still pressed on toward the fulfilment of the glorious destiny of the Filipino people! Shall we now be stopped by the fear of a few madmen who may turn bandits because they are too lazy to work? No, no! Besides, Major Crittenden, you will pardon me, but is it presumptuous for me to say that I know the Filipinos better than you yourself do?"

He faced about toward his auditor with a blandly polite smile, as if giving opportunity for a reply. Receiving none, he resumed his pacing.

"No. I do not fear that this law will cause an insurrection, not even among the Moros in Mindanao or Sulu. No! I regret that I cannot withdraw my measure, but it is impossible. My conscience and my honour cry out against the thought. I would be betraying the best interests of the Filipino people, if I should do so." He ran his hand through his long hair, and sat down sharply.

When the Assemblyman had begun to speak, Crittenden had drawn his chair nearer the table. As the

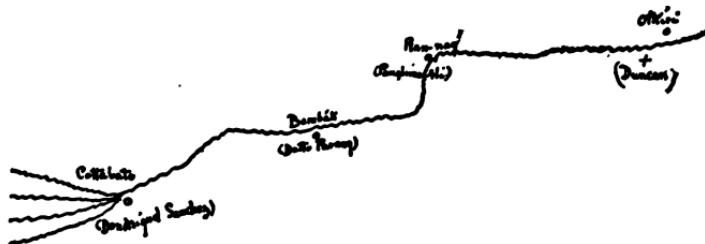
other flowed smoothly on, the officer's fingers found a pencil, and as if to occupy themselves while his mind was concentrated on the other's arguments, traced wavering lines upon a sheet of paper, and now and then formed a few letters.

When Sanchez had finished, and sat back in his chair in polite triumph, Crittenden absent-mindedly detached the sheet of paper from its pad. Holding each end in a thumb and forefinger, he tapped the table with its edge.

"I hope you will give due weight to the arguments of the other side, Señor Sanchez. I'm anxious, really anxious, to have you decide to do what is best for your own interests as well as for those of all others concerned."

"But, my dear friend," began the deputy, "as I have explained to you this moment——"

His words trailed into nothingness—his eyes had fallen on the paper held carelessly in his visitor's fingers. He leaned forward, staring, and as he stared, the brown of his skin gave place to a dingy saffron. On the paper was a rude map in skeleton outline:



His horrified glance came slowly up from the river-line that connected his name with the cross above that

of Duncan. But Crittenden was gazing thoughtfully toward the square of light that glimmered at the end of the sala.

Through the sickening buzzing in his ears, Sanchez heard a steady voice.

"It occurs to me you may not have taken into consideration the fact that the price of any commodity, a commodity for which there's a pretty constant demand, I mean—that the price depends upon the available supply, partly, at any rate—not upon the actual amount in existence, but the available supply of it."

Sanchez' breath came in labored gasps, held to silence by incredible effort. But Crittenden tapped the table with the edge of the paper.

"Now, take tobacco or rice or hemp, for example—yes, suppose we say, *hemp*. A serious disturbance in a hemp district, or even in a province where hemp is grown, might mean a fortune for someone who had a reserve supply already on hand, because, as you know, a disturbance produced by a band of ladrones, for example, might spread an idea that hemp would be scarce that season."

Crittenden's voice suddenly deepened. "Suppose this, Señor Sanchez! Suppose a man with large investments in hemp was in Cottabatto a month ago. You remember hemp prices were low then, and still falling? Suppose this man had collected a dozen rifles or so, and had sent them up the Rio Grande to a datto—one of the restless sort who through their sub-chiefs are always in touch with bands of Lanao outlaws. You don't need to be told that for a 'present' of a few thousand pesos a datto like that would oil the way for any sort of mischief. Well, a gang of Moro

bandits would have felt so well equipped with a lot of rifles that they would have resisted arrest to the last." His glance left the glimmering square at the end of the sala, and rested full on the Assemblyman. "In a case like that, Don Miguel, prices would mount unreasonably—and an unnatural inflation of prices is always bad. So, you see, my idea is that your bill might make the peasants uneasy, which would be bad for trade—and for all concerned."

The rasp of Sanchez' chair, suddenly thrust back, sounded like a shriek. He snatched up the untouched glass of whiskey and soda, and throwing wide the stifling folds of his kimono, walked unsteadily to the window. His back was held rigidly toward the desk, but the rattle of the glass against his teeth as he drank, betrayed the chill that gripped his soul.

Somewhere below a horse stamped, then whinnied plaintively. Dogs engaged in a brief and bitter combat. A frightened baby called upon its mother, who answered by a torrent of consolatory scolding.

When Sanchez turned toward the table, his cheeks had regained only the smallest portion of their natural brown.

"I beg your pardon, Major Crittenden," he said hoarsely. "This devilish dengue fever takes one so suddenly sometimes." His hand shook as he put down the empty glass. "But I must not let the fever cloud my judgment as a deputy of the Filipino people. I begin to believe you are right, Major Crittenden—my measure, perhaps, is not quite suited to the present degree of culture of my people. In fact, I am convinced. I shall withdraw my measure at once."

Crittenden slowly tore a sheet of paper into bits—

between his fingers a little shower fluttered into the waste-paper basket at his feet.

"I'm sure you'll act wisely by doing so, Don Miguel. It has been a pleasure to discuss affairs with you." He rose. "I must be going—I happen to have an engagement at Malacañan."

"My respects to His Excellency, the Governor-General," said Sanchez eagerly.

"I shall be glad to convey them. Please say good-by to Señora Sanchez for me. Good-by, Don Miguel."

"Good-by, Major Crittenden," returned the other almost gaily.

Crittenden stopped on the point of descending the stairs. "By the way, did I express my regret that your health should be so bad as to force you to go abroad?"

"Abroad? I?" exclaimed Sanchez. "My health?"

"Yes. It will be very wise in you to allow yourself a long rest from cares. You are quite right to take Señora Sanchez and go for a vacation in Europe. Five years will not be too long, surely. It will be a wise thing to do at once before complications set in."

"Five years—complications—Major Crittenden!"

"Complications of health, Don Miguel." He bowed the Assemblyman an easy good-morning.

But when the echoes of his caller's footsteps ceased to sound from the entrada, Sanchez stumbled to a chair. There he sat long. At times, a sarcastic and sneering smile flickered across his lips. At times, his eyes filled with tears, and his chin trembled like that of a frightened child.

XXXIV

A BOON DENIED

ANNE wandered in the quaint old garden at "Navarre," waiting for Alan Crittenden to come to her. She had summoned him in a sort of panic, a panic not sudden, however, nor caused by a single fear, but resulting from weeks-long uneasiness, and the culmination of a host of vague alarms.

The garden—made almost a fortalice by its high walls barbed with bits of broken glass—was laid out on a plan of its own or perhaps on no plan at all—its beauties were agreeably heterogeneous.

She strolled up a path to a pergola shading a seat of hewn marble greened with the stains of three hundred years. The pergola itself was thatched so thickly with the purple blossoms of the bougainvillea as to seem rather a cottage than an open-air pavilion. The ground in front stretched down a grassy slope to a pool, whose rim of ancient brick was almost hidden beneath the crowding leaves of water-plants. Close by, from a *molave* beam connecting the trunks of two mango-trees, hung innumerable air-plants, wound about by orchids dark-blue and white and lavender.

On the opposite slope of the garden, four granite columns supported as many vases of a style almost Etruscan—perhaps taken by the Great Captain from Italy to Castile, and thence sent to grace this pleasaunce in Spain's Pearl of the East. They were set in such fashion as to outline the four points of a cross formed of thick-clustering ferns. One arm of

the cross pointed to a bronze tablet let in the garden wall, whereon was an inscription:

DEO OPTIMO MAXIMO.
 EL EXCELENTE Y ILUSTRISIMO SEÑOR
 DON ADOLFO GONZALEZ LEON Y RODRIGUES
 CAPITAN-GENERAL DEL EJERCITO DE CASTILLA
 FUSILLADO POR INGLESES PIRATAS
 EL 10 DE MAYO 1652
 A LA EDAD DE 29 AÑOS.

ESPOSO MIO!
 TAN PRONTO ME HABEIS ABANDONADO!
 ROGAD POR ELLO
 Y POR ME
 SU DESCONSOLADA ESPOSA!

Bearded cavaliers of Spain in doublet and hose had walked that garden, and stately ladies, gravely gay, had trailed brocaded gowns there. What prayers had once been uttered! What songs sung! What vows exchanged! Anne wondered if a woman had ever made there such a plea as she planned to make that afternoon.

Prompt on the minute she had named in her note, she heard horses' hoofs clatter to a halt in the street beyond the garden wall. The porter ran out of his little lodge, and in a moment the iron gate swung open, and Crittenden entered the garden on foot. He was half-way to the house when he caught her signal from the seat under the pergola.

The sunlight, sifting through the leaves of the vine, was hardly brighter than her hair. She stood facing him, her hands clasped behind her, her body inclined toward him, her brows frowning a little with earnest-

ness. Her little wistful smile hovered about the corners of her mouth, at once imploring and resolute. Her rounded chin seemed made to be tilted by a manly hand.

He came to her baring his head, looking eminently soldierly in his riding-boots and spurs. Her hand-clasp was at once timid and fervent.

“It’s good of you to come.”

“I can’t claim any merit for pleasing myself.”

“But you’re pleasing me, too.”

“Then all the more pleasure for me.”

He sat down on the marble seat, yet not quite beside her, for she had shrunk back against the seat-arm, unconsciously afraid to concede a degree of intimacy that possibly might soon be lessened. Happily he was unaware of the significance of her attitude.

“Do you know this is the first time you’ve ever sent for me—except by way of some formal invitation or other?”

She knew she must come to the point before her courage should fail her. “I asked you to come to-day because I want to talk to you about something—something in particular—something I don’t understand.”

“Can I help you?”

“Yes—yes, I’m sure you can. You’re the only one I have—to appeal to, you know, when anything makes me uneasy—any man’s matter, I mean.”

“If I can do anything for you, I will. You know that.”

“Yes, I know. I was sure of it, but thank you for saying so. It makes it easier to ask you—about this.” The blood crept into her cheek. “You see—it’s about Dick.”

“Ah—yes.”

His tone was no less sympathetic, his manner no less kind than before, yet she felt that a curtain had fallen between them at the mention of her husband's name.

By that means of communication Gossip makes peculiarly her own, the fact that Anne had married a man of mixed blood and that she had married him without being aware of his mixed blood, had become known of all women and almost all men. Perhaps, in this case, the means by which Gossip's cruel tongue had been set wagging was not at all mysterious—Señora Toncog's petulant temper was not fitted to endure in silence her nephew's contemptuous treatment of her; besides, some of the servants might well have overheard what passed that unhappy morning when Anne had learned the truth.

So the matter had speedily become known to most of those in Manila who knew Dick Nelson's name. But only to Helen March had Anne ever mentioned the matter—and then only after she had shrinkingly felt all about her the subtle, unexpressed sympathy of those who made up her world.

Now, although he had never betrayed his knowledge by word or look, she knew that Crittenden despised her husband utterly, not because of his race, but because of the horror of that tacit lie under which he had married her. Thus, in spite of the mental curtain between them, she was forced to stumble on.

“I'm—well, I'm frightened about Dick. He's been acting strangely—little things, you know. I can't describe them, but I can feel them. I've a feeling he's in danger, in some way.” She tried to see his averted face. “You aren't laughing at me, are you?”

"Laughing at you? Good Heavens! No!"

She laid a quick hand on his arm. "Ah! You do know something? I can see you do! You know he is—that something is the matter! What? Tell me!"

He regarded her dumbly. She faltered, her voice pitiful. "I know—I didn't mean to ask you to tell me anything you're not free to tell. I understand there might be things—I only want you to promise you won't let any harm come to him." Something in his steady look brought the painful red to her cheeks.

"If I can prevent—" he began.

"Oh, you can, if you will. I know now how much you can do—officially, I mean. The Governor-General relies upon you absolutely in so many things. Oh, I know."

He endeavoured to take the whole matter lightly. "But this is all very indefinite, isn't it? I'm not at all sure what it is you have in mind. Just what is it you're afraid of?" He glanced at her, appraising her knowledge. "Do you know anything—anything specific—that has frightened you?"

She spread helpless hands. "That's just it! I don't know! It's all so bewildering—the whole atmosphere." Again she blushed painfully. "Perhaps you've noticed how awfully vague things are—the sort of haze—the—the ungetatableness, wherever—" She did not finish, but he understood thoroughly well what she could not bring herself to say.

Long ago, he had perceived how vague, exasperatingly vague, Dick Nelson was at all times, in his words, his actions, his very manners, even in the most ordinary affairs of life. "Ungetatableness" was the very word! To Crittenden, the other's mind seemed to be quick-

silver, half-fluid, half-solid, actual to be sure, but entirely ungraspable. There was a phantom soul in that graceful body. To try to apprehend his character was to trace the outlines of a bas-relief through a blanket.

“I’ve noticed—yes,” he said at last.

“Well, what I feel is vague, too—because I don’t know what is the matter, what is wrong. I only feel it—in the air. Please forgive me, if I seem ungetatable! I can’t help being so.”

He longed to lay a reassuring arm about her shoulders. Perhaps his suddenly-folded arms, and tightening lip—that look in his eyes she had hardly seen since the night of the dinner when he had spoken of the moth and the candle—perhaps these told her something of his impulse and the restraint he put upon it, for she sat tense a moment.

“So,” she went on, “if anything happens, I want you to promise to help—him. I don’t know what else to do,” she finished pitifully.

He made no answer, but she would not be denied. “You will, won’t you?”

He gave a sigh that was half a groan. “I’d do anything for you. But a man’s duty—a man can’t escape that!”

“His duty?”

“Honour, if you like. You wouldn’t want——”

“Surely it isn’t a question of that!”

He was silent again, and sat looking away across the garden with troubled eyes. But she could not heed them.

“No, no. It can’t be so serious. I only want you

to help him, if—if he's been led into any entanglement—political entanglement, I mean."

"I'll be honest with you," he said suddenly. "I—I care too much for you to be anything else. So I must tell you that I can't promise. I'm sorry—sorrier than I can say."

She turned her body toward him with an exquisite motion. Her lashes swept her burning cheeks. "I—I'm asking you . . . to do it—for me."

He was silent—so long that she looked slowly up to find him staring straight before him, his face very bleak.

Few things so humiliate a woman as to be forced to implore a boon of a man on the ground of his affection for her, and to find she has implored in vain. It makes little difference that he is profoundly moved by her appeal. If he is not stirred to the point of granting it, and that gladly, for her sake, she must feel herself scorned. All the tenderness, the trustfulness, with which she has put herself at his feet in the confident expectation of being lifted above him, has gone for nothing—the performance becomes merely pitiable. Humiliation and self-contempt overwhelm her, and the only balm for her self-respect is to lash her shame to resentment.

Anne rose to her feet, her face very pale save for a spot of crimson that flamed in each cheek.

"You say you care for—for my friendship! But you won't do what I ask!"

"You don't realize what you're asking. If you did—"

"I think we can't be friends any longer."

"Anne!"

It was the first time he had ever called her by the name. She shivered at the sound of it, but she would not flinch from her purpose. She felt a half-exultation at the pain she was causing herself and him.

"No, no! A friend helps one; . . . a stranger—doesn't!"

"If I could——"

"But you won't."

"I can't—I can't!"

"Then—I think we'd better not see each other any more—any more than we must." Her voice faltered in spite of her resolution.

"Don't!" he said. "Do you know what you're condemning me to? The days I don't see you aren't worth much!"

But something forced her to fight on—to fight to the last for the husband she had once loved. Her love might long since have been betrayed—of this she did not dare to think—but her woman's heritage, the service of devotion in weal or woe, made her strike back blindly.

"I must tell you—I've been such friends with you—only for Dick's sake!"

He gave her a look, stricken, yet fierce with the courage of a man not easily defeated or deceived. "Do you mean that? All our friendship—has it only been for that! On *his* account? Because you thought you might some day need my help for him?"

Her cheeks were burning, and she braced herself that her knees might not sink under her from shame—yet she managed to nod assent.

"I'll only believe it, if you *say* it," he persisted. "If it's true, you must say so. But it isn't!"

“Yes—it’s true.”

His own pain did not blind him to hers. With a sudden tender boldness, he placed one hand on her shoulder, the other beneath her chin, and lifted her face until in spite of her sweeping lashes, his blue eyes looked deep into her gray ones.

He drew a long breath. “Can you say *that*? How can you! I don’t believe it. I shan’t. Anne! don’t play with me.”

Beneath his imploring eyes, the blood crept from her cheeks until they were paler than his own. “Oh, no—I’m not. You know I couldn’t—with you.”

“Then how can you talk like this! Don’t you know the bare thought of it—hurts?”

She stepped back, and sank slowly to the marble seat behind her.

“Do you think I want—to hurt you?—you who—” Her voice trailed away. “But if you won’t help me—it’s so little to ask!—if you won’t help me, then how can I believe you are a real friend?”

“Anne! For Heaven’s sake, don’t say that!”

“Isn’t it the truth?”

“No!”

“It’s the same thing. The result’s the same.” She checked his protest by an imploring gesture. “Don’t let’s torture each other. You and I mustn’t do that. Even if you don’t help me now, you’ve been—you’ve always done so much for me——”

“Don’t you believe I’d spare you every pain in the world—if I could?” he said.

“Then—will you help me?”

He stared at her, then blindly about the garden. As she waited in a sort of terror, she noticed irrele-

vantly that the moon was up, although it was still daylight; and so free of lustre was the air and so bright the moon that the shadow of a slender fern lay clear against the arm of the marble seat.

His eyes came back to her, and stayed until it seemed to her that her very soul was shrivelling.

Then he turned, and went slowly down the path toward the iron gates of the garden.

XXXV

A CARABAO-HIDE WHIP

FONG, the tienda-keeper, was one of the few Chinamen who prefer to intoxicate themselves on whiskey rather than opium. With super-acuteness, he reasoned that although liquor bereft a man of his senses with a speed savouring of violence, whereas opium did so seductively, yet the effects of the latter were likely to extend themselves in such fashion as to restrict the bargaining faculties, while those of the former by exacerberating the nerves only rendered the commercial instinct more keen.

Besides, it took a deal of whiskey to bewilder him, and but three or four whiffs of opium, and it behooves a shopkeeper to keep himself in a condition for vigilance when active and thievish peasants are everywhere about.

So, even when drinking heavily, as he was this afternoon, he was competent to keep a sharp eye on the bunches of bananas and heaps of papayas and peppers and mangoes, and strips of tobacco and ginger, and slices of cocoanut and pig's-liver and fish, and the hundred other things in his shop. No lean brown hand could be thrust over the window-counter from the street, and hope to escape a slash of his bolo, unless that hand were very quick indeed.

Fong hated the brown men, and the white men, too, for that matter, and the few black men, big and good-natured, whom he saw when they came now and then to his tienda with their brown wives. And he would

have hated red men as well, had he dreamed that that particular sort of foreign devil existed. He hated them all, but he made money from them if he could, and he could and did whenever they dealt with him, saving infinitesimal sums by incredible thrift and toil, to spend in drink and gaming.

Recently the opportunity had come his way to make a handsome sum of money at a single stroke—enough to take him back to China and establish him there for life, with enough left over to buy the favour of the local mandarin or of the local "Red Beard" chief, if the bandits should be stronger in his home district than the constituted authorities. He had only to continue to carry a message from Manila to the provinces now and then, and to allow another hut of his not far from his shop to be used as a meeting-place—then would come the great upheaval, his fortune would be made, and he could snap his fingers at the Philippines and all foreign devils.

He hated all the men of other races and almost all of his own, but perhaps he hated most of all—but only as a cat does a mouse—one who was neither white nor brown, and not a man but a man-child; one who would soon be home to wash out a filthy shirt of his master's, and to sweep the shop and light the charcoal fire, and, although he was so little, to fetch the water for the soup—thin stuff Fong sold to the peasants at three centavos for a very small cocoanut-shell-full.

The Chinaman loved to torment the little mestizo boy, not only because of his blood, white and brown, but also because of his spirit which, for some reason, Fong could never quite break, although he had tried often enough and meant to try still oftener.

Why Buddo should have come every evening to his daily drudgery and his almost daily beating, the child was far too young to have told. But there was no magic in the matter.

Fong's tienda was the only place he could go—the only home he had. Even in the tropics one must have food, and shelter from the rains, or else one must die—and the sooner if one is only a tiny fellow who is hardly able to express his thoughts in any language, who has never had more than half a shirt to his back, and of whom people usually take no more notice than of the pink pig that follows him about.

That afternoon, when Buddo pushed open the bamboo door, and showed himself in the tienda, Fong, stretched at full length on a bench, greeted him with an ominous: "Oy!"

Buddo was not particularly disturbed by the threatening guttural. He no more expected kindness from the Chinaman than he expected unkindness from the Pretty Lady he sometimes visited in company with Tomboy-Scout or from Hippolito, the precinct patrolman, who always joked with him when they met and often gave him a piece of sugar-cane to suck. To Buddo it was as natural that Fong should snarl at him threateningly as it was that Pig-Scout should grunt joyfully.

Warily keeping beyond the reach of his master's hand and foot, he went about his tasks.

For a while, the other watched him in grim silence. But when the child was about to light the charcoal in the flat earthenware brazier, Fong stopped him with a guttural more peremptory than the first.

“Oy!”

Buddo looked up.

“Dlaw slide,” commanded his master, speaking in pidgin-English.

The boy stared at this unusual order. If carried out, it would have the effect of shutting the sort of window on whose ledge the counter was arranged, and so of closing the shop.

“Dlaw slide,” repeated the Chinaman. “Want catchee sleep.”

This time Buddo proceeded to obey with such haste as his slight strength permitted. In a moment or two the interior of the tienda was plunged in shadow, very soothing to Fong’s blood-shot eyes.

“All light!” he commanded. “You go ‘way!”

Unfortunately for Buddo, retreating gladly, he stumbled in the obscurity over the tiadero’s crafty foot, and was instantly in his clutches.

The man gave him a vicious shake. “Wha’ for you kick my foot?” he jeered.

Buddo, his head whirling, said nothing. He had never heard the fable of the lamb and the wolf, but he knew the uselessness of explanation.

The other thrust his evil eyes and flabby mouth almost into the boy’s face. “Wha’ for you no tell!” he growled.

He slipped the tips of his forefingers into the hollows under the child’s ears, and pressed. Buddo gasped.

“E—eh! You tell now mebbe?” grinned Fong.

Buddo quivered. The Chinaman, his lips twitching with sheer pleasure, watched his suffering. One thing more he might easily add to the child’s misery.

“ You—bastard ! ”

It is unlikely that Buddo had more than the vaguest understanding of the word thus applied to him, but by reason of its all-too-frequent occurrence on his master’s lips in the past, he realized perfectly that it was now designed to hurt him even more than the physical torture he was undergoing. His eyes filled with tears. He shook his head.

“ No, no ! Buddo—American ! ”

The tiendero released his victim’s ears, but held his soft body gripped between his leathery knees. The boy’s assertion exasperated him to the highest degree, but he was willing to prolong his torment.

“ Buddo—Filipino,” he said threateningly.

“ No—American ! ” persisted the boy.

The Chinaman, with a significant and sinister motion, lifted a heavy carabao-hide whip from the bench on which he sat.

“ Buddo—Filipino bastard,” he leered.

The child drew his breath in agony between the other’s gripping knees. Pain and fear made his chin tremble pitifully, but his little white teeth were bared in dauntless defiance.

“ No, no ! ” His voice was a wail. “ Buddo—American ! American ! ”

That afternoon Hippolito, the policeman, had business up town.

The half-starved son of the driver of a street carromatta, Hippolito had begun life for himself as a handy boy about a livery stable. Fired by a chance word of his American employer, he had gotten himself

appointed the American's house-servant—and a sufficiently poor one he made—under an arrangement whereby in return for his services at afternoon and night, he was allowed food, lodging, and the freedom of his mornings for school.

In the public school he acquired English of a sort, the three R's, and a city-wide renown as a baseball player. It was his prowess as a third-baseman that had first drawn the attention of a Constabulary officer to his lithe frame and resolute face.

So now, notwithstanding his regulation uniform, shield, and club, Hippolito was not in reality a member of the Municipal Police Force, but was a soldier of the Division of Information of the Constabulary, a *secreto*, detailed for sufficient reasons to play the part of a patrolman. In this capacity he had already been of material service to the Government, particularly because of the fact that, although so young a man, his energy and courage were tempered by a shrewd discretion, extremely desirable in a case where insular politics touched international ones.

Some time before, it had become his duty to interest himself in the way of life of Fong, the tiendero—to an extent, indeed, that would have frozen the latter worthy with horror had he dreamed of it. Hippolito's business up town that afternoon, was, in fact, to keep himself informed in respect of Fong's actions. A few centavos spent at his tienda would give the Constabulary detective opportunity for the necessary observation.

On his way, Hippolito bethought him of Buddo. The little mestizo had a warm corner in the Tagalog's

heart. His fearless blue-gray eyes, and the confiding manner in which he would slip his hand into the constabulario's had made the two great friends.

Now his eye was caught by a neat display of toilet articles in the window of a drug-store. He would buy a small gift for the child-friend. A quarter of a kilogram of lime-drops from that red jar? Yonder diminutive hand-glass? A curved toothbrush with snowy bristles, and a fascinating amber-hued handle? The very thing!—taking to the eye, and of the very foundations of personal hygiene! Hippolito had been thoroughly instructed in these matters in the public schools, and esteemed his own toothbrush far more highly than he did his breviary. It was high time the little Buddo should be taught the American ways of cleanliness.

When Hippolito reached the tienda, the fact that the window-slide was tightly drawn vaguely surprised him. He rapped upon it with his knuckles, and receiving no response, moved to the door, rapped again, pushed it open, and looked in.

At first he could distinguish nothing in the semi-darkness of the interior. Still he continued to peer about. All at once he uttered a cry of horror and rage!

A few minutes later—fortunately the precinct police-telegraph box was near—Hippolito helped the young Filipino surgeon to place the moaning child in the ambulance. The surgeon leaped in, and took the tossing head in gentle hands.

An ominous fire danced in Hippolito's eyes as he listened to the child's moaning.

"Doctór," he said thickly, "I go to arres' de man who has done dis."

The surgeon began to express a vehement desire for Fong's eternal torment. The *secreto* interrupted him.

"Please do me de favour to telephone to Major Crittenden at Constabulary Headquarters dat de child ees hurt." He gulped. "And save de little Buddo, doctór, if you please!"

XXXVI

A SINGULAR SUICIDE

HIPPOLITO's honest heart still burned like a coal within him as the ambulance bounded away. He thought very grimly of Fong.

At this hour of the day, when the time for the evening meal was drawing near, and the peasants would soon be coming to buy soup and rice and cocoanut-meat, the tiendero would not stray far from his shop. The probability was, therefore, that he had gone to a certain other shack on the bank of the little canal. If anything secret were in the wind, it was thither he would naturally resort.

The hut lay only a few hundred yards from the tienda, set on the ordinary low piles in a secluded place behind a thick grove of bamboo. The Constabulary *secreto* had already had reason to be acquainted with its location. Only two or three nights before he had lain concealed among the bamboos, his eye and ear to a crack in the floor of the hut, and had learned much of value to Government. Now he reflected that if the clang ing gong of the ambulance had not given warning, Fong was reasonably certain to be found there.

Hippolito hurried along the path across the fields.

When he climbed the short ladder, and softly pushed open the door of the flimsy shack, he gave an exclamation of satisfaction;—Fong sprawled on the floor, blowzed with liquor and sleep. His flabby mouth twitched as he slept, and he muttered to himself with inarticulate animal sounds.

Hippolito stirred him savagely with his booted foot.
“Get up, pig!”

Half-fuddled as he was, Fong instantly awoke, and stared up at his visitor.

“Get up, pig!”

The Chinaman’s yellow eyeballs turned; his yellow teeth gleamed behind leathery lips. Then he got scowling to his feet. The constabulario wasted no time in ceremony.

“I want you, *hombre!*”

Fong glowered. “Wha’ for you want me?” he demanded roughly.

“You mus’ go to de police-es-station wid me.”

“Wha’ for?”

“Because you have beaten de little Buddo almos’ until he ees dead.”

The drink which had led Fong beyond his usual limit of cruelty in his treatment of Buddo, was still strong in him. He indulged himself in a vicious leer.

“Beat him when like—all time mebbe!”

The sneer was fatal. It tore from the Tagalog the last shred of his restraint. The recollection of the child’s bleeding body scorched him like a flame. His eyes blazing, he struck the Chinaman furiously across the mouth with his open palm.

“You! You in Bilibid!” he screamed. “Ten years! Twenty years! All your life!” He was carried clean beyond himself. “You! Katipunan! Katipunan!! Katipunan!!!” His quivering hand and arm made a rapid and peculiar gesture.

The dread name and dread signal told Fong all! His face twisting like a vicious cat’s, he thrust his hand into his waistband for the fan-knife always ready there.

But before he could draw it, Hippolito closed with him.

Wrestling wildly, the two men fell to the floor. Their writhing bodies struck the flimsy grass wall at the back of the room, and smashing clear through it, fell to the ground eight feet below. Fong was underneath. The breath well-nigh driven from his body, he lay half stunned on the low bank of the canal, the detective fairly on top of him.

The sight of the other's body thus for a moment helpless at the water's edge, flashed into Hippolito's mind one of those ingeniously horrible plans peculiar to Orientals. A half realization that a solution of a Governmental perplexity lay under his hand united with his unsated desire for revenge to make him act instantly.

Retaining his unrelaxed grip on Fong's shoulders, he threw himself to one side, at the same time pushing the other's body strongly from him with his feet. The Chinaman rolled from the bank into the water of the canal, where he was submerged to the hair-line, at once sustained and held under by Hippolito's iron fingers.

The whole affair, from the time when they had come to grips in the shack until the moment the tiendero felt himself being drowned, had not occupied ten seconds. One standing within a rod of the two men must have thought that Fong had been precipitated into the water by his own violent struggles.

The wretch leaped, flinging up his arms, and madly trying to twist about. But his feet found no resting-place; his back was toward his enemy; the thick water filled his ears, eyes, and nose, and when he tried to

scream, rushed into his mouth and in a moment more had filled his lungs.

Lying prone on the bank, his arms extended until the water soaked them to the armpits, Hippolito held the raving man under. When his struggles had quite ceased, the constabulario began to call loudly for help.

At his third or fourth cry, a laborer came running from a distant field.

“Help, friend! Help!” cried Hippolito in the vernacular. “A madman here is trying to drown himself! Help!”

“Ah! A—ah!” screamed the tao, dancing helplessly about.

“Quick!” begged Hippolito. “I have hold of him! Help me to pull him out before he drags me in with him!” He writhed as if still engaged in struggling with a living man.

Very gingerly, the peasant knelt on the bank, and under the other’s exhortations, groped beneath the surface of the smoky water, until he felt the Chinaman’s shoulders. The two men heaved together, and Fong’s limp body was hauled out upon the bank. It presented a gruesome sight. The lips were drawn far back, showing the blackened gums above the yellow teeth. His lank queue lay like a dead snake across his face. The black cavern of his mouth was filled with water.

“He is dead,” said the tao. “A Chino! Ah! is it not Fong, the tiendero?”

“Who else!” answered Hippolito. He extracted a white handkerchief from his pocket, and began to mop his water-splashed tunic painstakingly. “I had come to arrest him for beating a boy almost to death, and

the madman said he would die but he would not go before the judge. I tried to hold him back, as you saw, but—" He shrugged his shoulders in melancholy regret.

"He was not only a madman—he was also a robber," said the tao, thrusting his bare toes contemptuously into the dead man's ribs. "He charged double what anyone else does for a cup of soup—besides, his soup was all water."

Other peasants had now come up, and stood about in a chattering group. The first laborer began proudly to explain the situation, with additions regarding his own prowess which in a little while he fully believed to be true.

Hippolito drew out his notebook, and assumed his most official manner.

"How do you call yourself, friend?" he asked. "You did your best to help me. He might have drowned me with him had it not been for you. I shall see that you get at least five pesos for your trouble. My officer will gladly pay so much to a brave man like you."

"My name is Paulus Camino," said the delighted tao. He looked proudly about on his fellows. "Yes, I did what I could. But, 'Sus-Maria! the Chino fought to die as another might have fought to live.' The clink of the five pesos in his mind's ear disposed him to be magnanimous. "But you, *policía*—surely you, also, will be rewarded. I myself will be glad to tell your officer how bravely you struggled to save the madman from himself."

Hippolito smiled deprecatingly. "It was only my duty," he answered with simple dignity.

XXXVII

IN HOSPITAL

THE Lizard Patrol of Boy Scouts, reduced by one-half, marched in mournful fashion up "Navarre" stairs.

Tomboy's rosebud mouth sagged at the corners, and her eyes were very sad. Puppy-Scout's ears drooped—the importunate nose was distinctly tearful—the hilarious tail actually dragged. The Lizard Patrol had come to call on its Lady Patroness, but it had come in no jovial mood.

Anne, a little surprised at the earliness of the visit, ushered them into the sala, rang for lemonade and cake, and prepared to amuse and be amused.

Tomboy waited politely until the muchacho had come and gone, then resolutely, albeit with manifest reluctance, waved aside the proffered refreshment. Anne forthwith became aware that something was grievously wrong.

She held out her arms. "Come here, chicken."

Tomboy placed herself languidly in their circle.

"Where are Buddo-Scout and Pig-Scout?" asked Anne.

Tears promptly brimmed Tomboy's eyes. "Buddo-Scout?" she said mournfully. "Poor Buddo-Scout's all in pieces."

"What!"

"Yes. He's all cut in little pieces." She bethought herself that exacting grown-ups might not consider her statement wholly accurate. "I mean the bad China-

man's dead, *drownded* dead, but Buddo-Scout's *most* dead."

"What are you talking about, child?" demanded Anne. "Has anything really happened to Buddo?"

"He's been hurt awful bad," asserted Tomboy. "Oh, just awful bad. And I guess Pig-Scout got kicked—awful bad in the stummick, I guess. I don't know what *has* become of *him*."

"Tell me all about it, Tomboy. How was Buddo hurt?"

"That bad Chinaman whipped him—whipped him awful. And then that nice p'liceman what plays with us sometimes, he went right after him to 'rest him, and he *drownded* hisself—and poor Buddo-Scout he's in the hospital."

"Where did you hear all this, chicken?"

"Major Crittenden told my mother. She went right over to the hospital already this morning. She says he sat up all night with Buddo-Scout 'cause he had bad dreams, and wanted to hold his hand all the time. He dreamt about the bad Chinaman, don't you s'pose? Major Crittenden ast my mother to come to the hospital, I guess." She finished proudly.

That the child's tale, however embellished by her fancy, had an all-too-substantial foundation of fact, Anne was now convinced. As she stared at the ingenuous narrator, a sickening regret crept into her heart that Crittenden had not called upon her for aid rather than upon another, as—she thought with pained pride—he would have been certain to do only a few days before.

Having imparted her news with proper dignity, Tomboy slipped from her hostess's knee, and proceeded

to drink her lemonade, while Puppy-Scout's woe vanished in the ecstasy of bolting slices of cake much too generous for his throat.

Anne hurried to the telephone. A moment's talk with Mrs. Easton gave her the details of the affair so far as she knew them.

"Do run down to the General Hospital, and see the poor little fellow, Anne," urged Mrs. Easton as she hung up the receiver.

Anne could have wept that anyone should think she was in need of such reminder. Had she been so selfishly absorbed of late in her anxieties over Dick and herself that even her women friends were beginning to be estranged from her! She tried to dismiss the thought, but the sting of it remained.

"I'm going out for a while, Tomboy," she announced after the carriage had been ordered. "You may stay here, and play as long as you like, and if you want some more lemonade, call Braulio."

"What shall I play with?" asked the Scoutmaster.

"Anything you like, dear," returned Anne absent-mindedly. "Help yourself." She pinned on a wide-brimmed hat, and hurried down to the carriage.

In the lobby of the cool-looking pavilions that make up the Philippines General Hospital, she asked to see Buddo. She knew no other name for him, but was able to describe him accurately.

"Oh, yes," said the brisk American office-attendant, consulting his register. "I know who you mean. Here's the case: '*Disease*, severe contusions of face and body, lacerations of chest, back, and legs; *cause*, assault; *age*, about six years; *Race*, American and Filipina half-caste; *Name*, Henry Newbold.'" He

looked up. "We had to let it go at 'Buddo' at first—that was the only name the ambulance man got. But afterward Major Crittenden—Crittenden of the Constabulary, you know—he told us the kid's name, or at any rate, his father's name. Those constabularios know everything that goes on in this town worth knowing, they certainly do."

He seized a desk telephone, and in a moment turned again to Anne. "The head-nurse says you can come right up. She'll meet you at the head of the stairs."

On the floor above, the business-like American head-nurse turned her over to a subordinate, a broad-faced Filipina who smiled at her gently. "Good-morning, modham. You weesh to see Henry Newbold? He ees in de private room on de right."

Anne hung back. "How is he? Will he get well?"

"Oh, yes, modham. He shall be well very soon—a week or two weeks, perhaps, dat ees all. He was beaten much cru-el-ly," she pronounced the word with slow determination—"but he ees out of danger already. He shall be strong once more soon, also, because now he has good food to eat. He nevair had enough food in hees life before dis time, I s'ink."

Anne made an inarticulate sound of pity. How many times had she given Buddo-Scout lemonade and sweets when she might well have supplied him with nourishing food! The nurse eyed her curiously.

"Will you go in with me?" asked Anne.

"It ees not necessary, modham."

Anne opened the door of the room that the nurse had pointed out, and stepped softly within. As she moved forward, a laugh surprised her. In the bed at the farther side of a screen lay Buddo, chuckling

weakly at the antics of a man who sat by the bedside engaged in an apparently desperate effort to balance an apparently-struggling teddy-bear on his knee.

She stood for a moment, her hand still on the door-knob, looking at him uncertainly, her eyes shadowy beneath her wide-brimmed hat. Then he glanced up and saw her.

He rose to his feet, his face paling a little, placed the toy on the child's bed, and bowing to Anne without meeting her eyes, was moving toward the door, when she spoke imploringly.

"Oh! Don't go! Please!"

He faced her now without flinching. "Yes, I'm the one to go; you must stay. I didn't know you were coming—but the boy has been asking for you."

"I'll stay. But don't you go. He wants you, too, I know. Can't we both stay?—please?"

Without a word, he led the way back to the bedside. The boy gave a cry of joy. "O—oh! The Pretty Lady!"

The bandages on his wee body were hidden by the bedclothes, but the swollen and discolored flesh about his eyes, made doubly emphatic by its coating of iodine, gave him a sufficiently ghastly appearance.

Tears came to her eyes. She bent down and put her cool cheek to his.

"He's doing finely," Crittenden said gently. "You'll be strong again soon, won't you, Buddo?"

The child doubled a tiny fist. "Buddo can lick you," he grinned.

"You'll have to grow a bit to do that, old man."

"Buddo can lick you, but he won't—not you or the Pretty Lady either."

Anne's peal of laughter made the little fellow's eyes dance. "Do it again!" he begged.

"Do what, honey?"

"Laugh that way."

Involuntarily she obeyed him.

"Just like a bird," declared the boy with the air of a connoisseur.

He seized his toy in a determined grip. "Laugh, bear, like the Pretty Lady does!" But the bear betraying no intention of carrying out the command, the child fixed his wise eyes on Anne. "There's real bears in America. Buddo'll see 'em—Buddo's goin' there sometime. And—and he's goin' to school there, too. Major Crittenden says so. That's why Buddo must get well soon, so's he can go to school in America." He sucked in his lower lip with a sudden trembling very pitiful to see. "There ain't any bad Chinos in America!" His haunted eyes besought her confirmation.

Crittenden spoke quickly. "Of course not. Buddo, boys play baseball in America even better than they do here. It looks to me as if you'd be about the right size for a first-class pitcher. What do you think?"

The child was at once diverted. "Yes, yes. Buddo'll get well soon so's he can play baseball. You can play, too, bear."

Obeying a motion of Anne's head, Crittenden followed her through the archway at the end of the room onto a veranda, deep and long, and cool in gray concrete.

The sight of her there, fresh in her white gown, breathing as she always did to him, a potentiality of friendliness, of comradeship, of delight, brought home

to him his loss, his utter failure. Why had it befallen that they were no longer friends? He had had to refuse what she asked of him, it was true. And yet, surely, he might have managed better!

"You've been so good to Buddo," she said. "Do you really intend to send him to school—at home?"

"I've half a notion to do it—as soon as he's well enough to travel, and I can find someone for him to travel with. I know just the place to send him—a school kept by a former classmate of mine. Buddo's father—Newbold his name is—was in business in a small way out here. He was a good deal of a ne'er-do-well. But I hear he has been doing better in America. Once give the little fellow a start—make him look presentable—and Newbold may be glad to be reminded of his son's existence. I've known one or two cases like that. At any rate, that's the line I rather have in mind to take."

"It's—it's like you."

"It's nothing."

"I wonder if something can't be done for other cases—like Buddo's."

"It's a big problem."

"I believe I'll try. I want to do something—where there's so much—heartache."

"You're as gracious as Heaven," he said huskily, "to everything but me."

He turned back into the room so suddenly that he did not see her imploring gesture.

Resolutely keeping back her tears, she followed him to a seat beside the bed. There she chatted gayly to the boy a few minutes, and at last rose.

“Good-by, Buddo. What do you want me to bring you to-morrow?”

“The most thing in all the world?”

“Yes, the very most.”

“I want Tomboy-Scout!” In spite of his weakness, it was a veritable shout. “Yes, and I want to see Pig-Scout, too.”

“I’ll bring them both,” declared Anne firmly.

When Crittenden stepped aside after opening the door for her, she turned quickly, her hand outstretched, her eyes shining from her pale face.

“Alan! I’m ashamed—and sorry—and——”

His face shone glorified. “Oh, don’t! Forgive me!”

Only Buddo was there to see as he bent and kissed her hand.

XXXVIII

DISCOVERIES

WHEN she reached "Navarre," the documents and letters that lay strewn about the sala made her exclaim a little. Then she remembered her careless *carte blanche* to Tomboy to amuse herself with whatever she might find. Evidently the sprite had decided upon Dick's writing-desk as the most eligible plaything at hand, and had used its contents as materials for paper-houses.

There was nothing to do but put the scattered array in as good order as possible. Anne herself began the task.

She had almost accomplished it, when a letter torn jaggedly across attracted her attention. Thinking that Tomboy's fingers must have waxed destructive as well as playful, she tried to fit the two nearly severed pieces together. In doing so, the writing caught her eye, and in a flash, without volition on her part, the contents of the note were stamped on her brain. It was dated the day before.

"It has been reported by a Constabulary secret-service man that the owner of a hut on the *estero* where certain meetings have been held from time to time, drowned himself late this afternoon. One of the other men who has been present at the meetings referred to will leave the Islands by steamer at midnight. He will not return.

"Please inform the third man that he need be under no apprehension as to his own safety, as it is well understood by high authority that he has been deceived by certain interested persons.

"ALAN CRITTENDEN."

Anne stared vaguely about her. What did this curious rigmarole mean, without address, and signed by Alan Crittenden? There seemed to be veiled insinuations—obscure hints! Crittenden was not the sort to put his name to a childish letter. It was clear that some reference must be intended to the Chinaman who had beaten Buddo. But who was the other man who apparently had been so alarmed by the Chinaman's death that he had fled from Manila that same night—not to return? Why had he been so alarmed? And, most curious of all, who was the third man whom Dick had been commissioned to inform—

The blood rushed to Anne's heart! She understood!

She stared unseeingly before her, while her fingers tore the note into fragments, and dropped them into the waste-paper basket that stood by the desk. Doubtless Dick's almost uncontrollable agitation after reading the note the night before had prevented him from perceiving how ineffectual had been his instinctive effort to destroy it—incriminatory and life-giving at once.

As in a dream, Anne sought her room, and sank into a chair facing the fire-tree outside her window. It was here she always came for refuge. And she must think—think!

She recalled the haggard eyes and pale face Dick had presented at breakfast that morning—the deep lines about his mouth. In answer to her question, he had complained of headache and fever, but instead of resting as might have been expected of a man half sick, he had gone out in unusual haste. As he crossed the sala, his knees had bent under him like those of an old man.

It was clear to her now that he must have found Crittenden's communication awaiting him when he had reached home the evening before, and after reading it, had passed a sleepless night. She had been in her own room an hour or more last night when she heard him moving about the sala. It was even possible that he had gone out again at once—perhaps he had been in time for a few words with the "other man" before the latter sailed. Her mind leaped keenly to his identity. It must be Gorsjiu, the Japanese consul!

She could have no doubt of it. From the very first he had forced himself upon Dick—they had rapidly grown intimate. Their apparent friendship had been a matter of mild amusement to her, for they seemed to have nothing in common, except possibly business interests, and that term, always vague, when used by Dick had come to mean nothing to her.

She thought of Gorsjiu's wide yet thin-lipped smile, his eyes, a hint of pathos in their depths, his narrow chest and white hair, above all, his nose, the nose of the crow rather than the hawk, yet a predatory nose. A strange man. Yes—Gorsjiu it was who was responsible for the conspiracy!

The word started to her mind intuitively. She sat staring at it. It justified itself swiftly. That night at the Governor-General's reception—the two men under the veranda! Crittenden and she had seen Gorsjiu make a peculiar gesture to Dick. Had it not been a bold effort on the consul's part to ascertain what knowledge her husband might already have of secret forces at work?

Crittenden had been extraordinarily moved by that singular gesture. The grim menace of his face came be-

fore her—and how he had evaded her query afterward. It was true that Dick's stare of surprise had been frank and convincing, but much water had flowed under the bridge since then—and past "the hut on the *estero*," too, she thought shuddering.

There were a score of minor circumstances pointing to a particular understanding between the consul and Dick—and between how many others! Had the determination of Miguel Sanchez and his wife to spend several years in Europe anything to do with it? It had been suddenly announced, and the journey itself had been begun almost with precipitation. There had been comment upon the matter at the time, for clearly so protracted a stay abroad meant the destruction of Sanchez' political career.

What had been the real reason for Dick's trip with the consul to that unheard-of little town in the north of Luzon? Was it really their interest in a tobacco plantation that had taken them there? Crittenden could have told her that the remote hamlet, walled in on the land side by mountains and forest, had a tiny deep-water harbour, where any sort of craft might lie long undiscovered—and the place was but a few hours' steaming from Formosa.

He could have told her, also, by what roundabout means he had managed to convey to Gorsjiu an account of Fong's apparent suicide; how the news had at once borne a dreadful message to the consul—himself an Oriental—a warning that the Chinaman's death was only the first of a series of subtly-planned executions of the conspirators; how Gorsjiu foresaw for himself a sudden and violent end by some seeming accident apparently so unavoidable that Diplomacy would

not even know a suspicion; and how he had fled before that terror which his fancy foresaw would walk for him in darkness and by noonday.

Of the details of the danger which was threatening, or had recently threatened, her husband—of the conspiracy into which he had been drawn—Anne had no knowledge, hardly a conjecture.

But she had long ago read whatever history of Philippine matters had fallen into her hands. She knew the story of the *pulajanes* fanaticism in Samar in 1905, of the insurrection of 1899, of Aguinaldo and the earlier affrays of 1896, of the conspiracy of Bonifacio and his bloody society of the Katipunan of the same year. All these were but the outer manifestations of men who made world-politics: of schemers in Madrid, in Tokio, in Paris, in Berlin, in Vienna, in London, moving deep below the surface of affairs, seeking the attainment of their ends through the blood and sweat of other men, men braver, more enthusiastic, more gullible, or more susceptible to the lure of vanity or gold.

Some such financial aid as a man like Dick could furnish was indispensable for the success of a political undertaking of magnitude. A foreign power, not daring to act openly yet eager to create a condition which would lead to advantage to itself, must secure the help of private resources. The political reward for the man who supplied them would be immense—the lure dazzling to any discontented or unstable mind.

Whether Dick had been a dupe or one of the dupers in such a mad scheme, he must now be undeceived, or at any rate, terrified into its abandonment. Anne thanked God for his escape! He had long ceased to be her lover—the shadow of another woman lay across

the path!—but he was still her husband. He must still be protected from himself.

Perhaps the shock of his narrow escape from one sort of peril would serve to free him, also, from another—one fraught with hardly-less danger to himself and her than if the hand of the Law had closed upon him. Anne prayed that it might be so, but prayed with scant hope.

Then for the first time she realized who it was that had saved him from the Law. Alan Crittenden and no other!

Only a few days before she had upbraided Crittenden—had treated him with hot resentment. And at the very time when he had refused to commit himself upon what she now knew was a point of honour, since it meant the infraction of his duty—at that time not only had he been aware of Dick's grandiose schemes, but actually was engaged in trying to devise a method to render them futile without harm to the offender. Chance, in the form of a frightened Chinaman's self-immolation—as she thought it—had found him a way, but he had been instant to seize its possibilities.

She knew that it was not for Dick's sake but for her own that Crittenden had persuaded Government to clemency. He had been magnanimous where he might easily have been only just. She drew a breath of thankfulness that she had shown him her penitence that very morning—before she knew of what he had done for her.

Her throat ached, but not entirely from unhappiness. She sat, the tears in her eyes, feeling again his lips upon her hand.

XXXIX

AFRAID

A FORTNIGHT later, all the world made its annual exodus from Manila to Baguio.

For a week, extraordinary throngs might have been seen about the Tondo Station in Manila; crowded first-class carriages on the north-bound trains; children fretful at Dagupan; mothers and fathers exhausted at Camp One.

But after this wearisome part of the journey, came the revivifying climb in the great automobiles up the Benguet Road to Baguio. In the middle of the afternoon, the lowlands were left to swelter in a climate like that of a Washington summer—and with the twinkling of the first stars above the gorge of the Bued River, the motor-cars flashed into the mountain capital and the blissful coolness of a Vermont autumn.

A thousand officials and clerks of the Insular Government and the Army, and with them the greater part of the social life of Manila, sought new strength and energy in the balsamed air of the Benguet highlands.

In the days following her discovery of Dick's political entanglement, Anne had tried bravely to win back the old footing between herself and her husband. The matter of his connection with Gorsjiu in those grandiose schemes which had come to nothing, was not openly referred to between them, but it was plain to her that the shock of realization that all his movements were known to Government had sobered him, reducing

him to a sort of ostentatious frankness in all his business and public affairs.

He felt Anne's sympathy and gentleness, persistently even if timidly proffered him; he guessed that she must have some knowledge of what he had so narrowly escaped. But his consciousness of these things did not bring him any closer to her. On the contrary, it embittered him, as injuries forgiven too often only render more exasperate the unrepentant offender.

Failing to win him by gentleness and sympathy, unspoken but not unexpressed, Anne struggled with herself to overcome the profound sense of pride and shame which had always held her dumb when she would have talked of Julie Smythberg.

In despair, she found herself wishing that the woman had come vitally into Dick's life, since come she must, before she herself had learned that he was half Malayan. In that case, as she fancied, she might have been able to appeal to him frankly, almost with respect. But now—revolt against the pitiable thought as she might—her husband's blood, the point of view that blood made possible, fixed a gulf between them; a gulf the more impassable since it might not be confessed. To Anne there was something unutterably shaming in laying bare to Dick her knowledge of his affair with Julie Smythberg—if affair it were—and her anguish over it.

At last, since better way was none, she determined to tell him what she guessed and what she feared, and to throw herself upon his mercy if not his honour and duty.

The result was the crowning humiliation of her life. The sacrifice of her modesty and shrinking encountered

the net of Dick's infinite vagueness, and finally the barrier of his indifference and silence. Their talk, conducted on her part, with all the tenderness of a submissively inclined woman, ended in a haze more painful to her than downright brutality would have been. Months afterward, she would awake at night, her body tingling in every nerve with shame at the memory of Dick's expressionless glance.

Thus thrown back upon herself, she realized at last that nothing was left for her in life but silent endurance of a situation almost intolerable, for so long as Dick and the woman who controlled him should allow it to continue.

At one time she had wondered why Paul Smythberg should tolerate the existence of a relationship so big with dishonour, actual or possible, to himself—the man was not a physical poltroon. But in other ways he was worse. The brokerage Dick placed in his hands meant many thousands of pesos a year to Smythberg and Company—and the Company were stockholders in England, avid of fourteen per cent. The withdrawal of the Nelson interests would have been a fatal blow to Smythberg's financial standing. He shut his eyes! She had come to understand the matter well enough.

But with the commencement of the new life at Baguio, she dismissed from her mind, so far as might be, the pity of the present situation and the tragedy of its inevitable end. The mountain air combined with her resolved cheerfulness to bring back to her cheek the rose-satin bloom that had long been wanting there.

She took long rides among the hills where the crisp air was like a tonic to her mind. Before many days the wine of the out-of-doors was having its healing

way; and of an early morning, as she put her pony to a gallop along a shady trail, or climbed to a point on a piney slope whence she could gain a view of the mist-blue valleys, she found herself singing a little tune or whistling softly to herself in involuntary response.

To Crittenden, who saw her often rather than long, her hair took on a brighter hue, her eyes a deeper light. Although they two seemed to have come to a hopeless impasse in their lives, yet at least he had a hope that his presence helped a little to diminish her unhappiness. They were often together, but almost never alone. Dick was so often engaged about his own affairs that Crittenden might have spent long hours tête-à-tête with Anne quite undisturbed. That he did not do so was because he could not tolerate the thought that any breath of gossip should stir against her.

The Nelsons' cottage was set in a grove of pines on the slope of a hill. The roads to the Country Club, to the Governor-General's home at "Mansion House," and to Government Centre in the outskirts of Baguio village, were all in sight from the veranda.

At almost any hour of the day, parties of Americans could be seen on business or pleasure bent; and groups of half-naked Igorotes—Bontocs, Kalingas, Ifugaos—treading a peaceful way across the hills where lately they had wielded the head-axe and the barbed spear.

By night, pleasant sounds drifted up to the cottage: the laughter of girls; the twang of a banjo from a passing escort-wagon; the murmur of a burn among the stones of a ferny valley; the music of a harmonized motor-horn; and at eleven o'clock, the notes

of the bugle, infinitely mournful, sobbing out "Taps" at Camp John Hay.

Between the pines of the mountain-tops, stars twinkled into view, hardly distinguishable from the campfires of the tribesmen. The moon rolled majestic along the brow of a range or advanced glorious down a cañon. The whole world seemed to sigh with the sighing wind in sheer delight of living.

One morning, having received no answer to her cheery call, Helen March left her pony tied to a tree beside the road, and climbed up the path to the cottage. She found Anne seated on the far corner of the veranda, looking dreamily out over the pine-clad valley.

Her hair was drawn back to the nape of her neck in its usual simple fashion, and in her dark-blue gown with its collar and cuffs of white, she made so sweet a picture that Helen felt a renewed indignation on behalf of her friend. Helen had never liked Dick Nelson.

"Hello! Anne-à-Dreams!" she called.

Anne waved her to a seat beside her.

"You're wanted for a riding-party to-morrow," said Helen,—"provided it doesn't rain, of course. You—and Dick, if he can come—and the Eastons, and Major Crittenden and I, and John Holbrook, and some others."

"John Holbrook will be my partner, of course," said Anne demurely.

The colour rose in Helen's cheeks. "You tease! I suppose there's no use in my saying I wanted to have things arranged in that way, but—"

"No—there's no use!"

In the months that had passed since Bob Duncan's death, Helen had recovered her normal health and spirits. Yet there was still an ache in her heart that would be long in healing. Of late Anne had begun to hope that John Holbrook, a manly young fellow of the Forestry Service, might hasten the cure of Time.

She had noticed him in attendance on Helen—a man both attractive and capable—and liked him for the quietness of his devotion. If Helen might learn to look for the comfort of his presence without fancying herself in any way untrue to the image earlier in her heart, he might become very dear to her.

"Major Crittenden said we'd better start from the Country Club about four o'clock," said Helen.

"I'll be prompt."

Helen hummed a careless tune, then: "Have you heard any rumours about trouble in China, Anne?"

"Only the usual thing—pirates and revolutions. Is there anything new?"

Helen nodded. "They say some of our troops may have to be sent over."

Anne's hand went unconsciously to her throat, while Helen glanced away in quick sympathy.

"You mean—"

"I don't know. I don't really know anything about it. But John Holbrook was saying he heard the rumour at 'Mansion House'—and that one of the Governor-General's aides might be sent along to 'observe'—whatever that means."

"Will it be—Major Crittenden?"

"That's all I heard, dear. And he isn't an aide, you know."

"No, of course not—not formally."

She glanced up—to see Dick, who had taken a short cut over the hill behind the cottage, and so had come rather suddenly upon them, his footsteps unheard on the grass.

“O—oh. There’s Dick!”

He looked very boyish and handsome in his white flannels, a tennis racket swinging in his hands. The consciousness of what her thoughts had been a moment before, brought a flush to Anne’s cheeks. He glanced at her, then keenly down the path and along the road.

“Hello, children! Gossiping a little? My character has been in your hands, you know.”

“It was safe from us,” returned Helen, not enamoured of his slightly sarcastic tone. “Have you had a good game?”

“So-so,” he returned noncommittally. He was not anxious to give the particulars of a game which, in fact, had not taken place.

“We’re asked on a riding-party for to-morrow, Dick,” said Anne. “Shall we go?”

He gave her his quick glance. “Oh, are we? Hum-m! What time?”

“Four o’clock—a long ride up Santo Tomás way,” explained Helen, uneasy lest he might put some obstacle in Anne’s path.

“Santo Tomás!” He turned to Anne. “That means you—we—can’t get back until late—midnight, perhaps?”

“I suppose so, Dick, but——”

“Santo Tomás,” he repeated. “Are you sure you can get through—won’t have to turn back? I hear the cars up from Camp One have skidded pretty badly on the Zigzag once or twice—on the wet ground. The

Santo Tomás trail may be worse. Are you sure one of those cloudbursts back in the mountains hasn't washed out the trail?"

"Captain Easton says it's all right," said Helen. "He had a man out looking over it yesterday."

"All right! We'll go. I've been longing for a good long ride."

Both women were rather astonished by his sudden assent, given abruptly and not quite agreeably.

They sat silent a while after he had gone into the house. "If he begins to be rude to her openly," thought Helen, "I hope—I really hope—" She bit her lip, a little frightened at the violence of her thoughts.

"Dick's a good rider," she said rather to break the awkward silence than because she was interested in the fact. She went on, not very veraciously: "I thought he'd like to go for a good 'hike' like that."

"Yes. He rides well—but he's rather reckless. Sometimes I've been afraid he'd get a fall on these rough trails."

"Oh, he knows the ground," Helen assured her.

For a while she was silent again, then following a subtle chain of thought, she eyed Anne, who was sitting, her hands gripped on her lap, gazing into vacancy.

"Are you and Dick going home—to America—for a visit this year?"

Anne guessed what was in her mind, but at that moment she was weary of pretences.

"I've tried to get him to do that, but—" She shook her head.

“Sha’n’t you go alone, then, dear?”

Anne took the other’s cheeks between her palms, and gave her head a little shake.

“If you were married, you wouldn’t need to ask that.”

“But, Anne——”

“Oh, child!” she said gently. “I can’t leave him *alone*. I can’t do that! Don’t you see—I’m *afraid*?”

XL

ON THE BRINK OF THE PRECIPICE

THE morning of the next day the clouds hung heavy over the farther heights of the Cordillera Central, and even in Baguio the rain fell lightly. But by afternoon the air was immaculately clear, save where in the remote fastnesses mists still wrapped the mountains.

Dick had complained of a touch of dengue fever that morning and, after siesta, had declared that he was not fit to ride. Accordingly Anne had purposed to stay behind as well, but when he noticed that she was making no preparations for the trip, he refused to allow her to "sacrifice herself," and insisted almost vehemently that she should don her riding clothes, and join the party for Santo Tomás.

"It isn't likely Crittenden will have any girl along," he said. "I fancy he'll trouble himself enough to look after you a little."

Anne reflected ruefully that Dick's bearing toward her had begun to have a touch of coarseness, even of malice.

However, his desire to be rid of her was so apparent that she left him, lounging on the veranda, languidly reading. Nevertheless, after she had mounted, she looked down at him with genuine tenderness. Perhaps, in the remotest recesses of her heart was a vague presentiment that this was no ordinary parting.

"Are you sure you'll be all right?" she asked.

"Oh, yes, of course. Don't bother about me."

“Good-by, then—Dick.”

“Good-by—Anne.” The gentleness implied in the use of her name, long avoided by him, seemed to be expressed almost in spite of himself.

When she had rounded the curve of the road above the house, she remembered to wonder that he should try to read when his head was aching so fiercely.

At the Country Club, Crittenden quietly swung his mount alongside hers. “I began to be afraid you weren’t coming.”

“Dick had a headache, and I did mean to stay to look after him, but—” She paused, not in embarrassment, but in vague pain at the recollection of his hardly veiled impatience of her presence.

“But he wouldn’t let you lose a glorious afternoon like this. He was right, too. Have you heard the plan?”

“The Santo Tomás trail, isn’t it?”

“Well, in that direction, at any rate—as far as we can go before dark. Then a campfire supper, and back down the trail by moonlight. Green moonlight and the stars, and the rose face of you! It’s bound to be wonderful—this ride.”

“Is that your own verse—the ‘green moonlight’?”

“Is it a verse? Well, it’s yours now. Sacred to—to Anne Nelson.”

“Heavens! That ‘sacred’ sounds like a line carved on my tombstone.”

She spoke gaily, yet she was aware of an unrestrained boyishness in him—almost a recklessness—which thrilled yet frightened her. He was gazing at

her with what she refused to admit to herself was hunger in his eyes.

Her tan riding-boots were met by a jaunty coat of white linen. Her white helmet, of a shape as soldierly as his own, half hid her hair, and shadowed without concealing her eyes. He had long ago realized that harvest-yellow hair and sea-gray eyes were something more than the figments of a poet's dreams.

Swaying easily to the canter of her sturdy Ilocano pony, she looked like a boy on whose cheek the peach-bloom of the child had not yet given way to the hardly less delicate glow of the youth. The sky above them was a delicate blue—the hillslopes were dappled by sunlight and shadow—the wind sighed through the pines beside the road. When their ponies fell to a walk, he leaned toward her.

“I’m expecting orders before long—orders of detachment. I may have to go away.”

“You mean—from the Islands?”

“Yes.” He could not see her face, half turned as if to look across a ravine.

“You’re going—to the United States?”

“No—only to China.”

“A long stay?”

He was watching her keenly. “If I go, it will mean five or six months, perhaps more.”

“Five or six months.” Her voice was even now, and her eyes came slowly to his, but her hands were twisting and untwisting her pony’s reins. “I suppose—you’ll be rather glad to get a change of climate.”

“Not in the least. You know I won’t. You know I’d rather be here—*here!*—than anywhere else in the world.” He struck his palm on the pommel of his

saddle. "I hate to go. But if I get the orders, it'll be my duty. And—it's worse to stay!"

He checked himself with an effort that left him pale. She did not dare to look at him, but rode, gazing straight before her, with a smile so wavering and pitiful that remorse clutched him, as if he had been taking advantage of an unhappy child. His face softened.

"You see," he declared, "I've gotten so fond of the Islands, that they're almost home to me. I grow excited at the bare thought of leaving them."

She made no answer, and for a time nothing was heard but the drumming of the ponies' hoofs as the party rode past the kiosk and Government Centre—they had taken a circuitous route—and on through the village; past dance-halls where music sounded in sinister gaiety, to the Santo Tomás trail beyond.

They were a jolly group enough. In the rear, Captain Easton and his wife chatted merrily together—after nearly ten years of married life each still found the other the most interesting person in the world. John Holbrook and "Tom" Brown exchanged badinage with Helen March and Mary Travis. At a little distance rode an Igorote constabulario, escorting a pack-mule laden with the camp- and supper-materials.

"I say, Mrs. Nelson," called Brown as the ponies fell again to a walk at the beginning of the up-grade. "I'm being badly treated here. I demand your protection."

Anne laughed back at him. "I'll wager you don't need it."

"No, indeed, he doesn't!" exclaimed Miss Travis.

"Tom" loftily ignored her. "You see, Mrs. Nelson, I've been jumped on because I called—hum-m!—

a certain person by her first name—Mary, you know. I couldn't help it. I want to ask you—when a man's in love with a girl, he loves her by her first name, doesn't he?"

"Tom Brown, you're perfectly silly!" cried Miss Travis, blushing furiously.

The ascent of the mountain-slope had fairly begun. All about them, at wide and irregular intervals, rose great pine-trees, their boughs a shining green, their trunks gray with a faint undertone of pink as if the heart of the wood diffused its colour through the outer bark. Cut deep in the hillside wound the trail, heavy with powdery red earth.

Now and then they overtook Igorotes, tramping briskly along, clad only in a loin-cloth and scant, flapping jacket. About them clung that scent of the wild one detects on one's hands after fondling a deer. The feet of the older tribesmen, distorted by years of clutching for a hold on precipitous trails and terraced rice-paddies, left in the dust prints curved to incredible arcs. Shock-haired and black-eyed, the men stared up at the Americans, their broad faces ready to grin their pleasure at the expected: "Good-morning!"

The Igorote women, peeping out from under huge baskets strapped to their backs, beat a bamboo tuning-fork against the palms of their hands, the faint notes cheering the tedium of their overburdened march.

Naked boys led quadrupeds purchased at the morning's market in Baguio. Kids and pigs lamented in bleats or grunts, or made eccentric dashes to escape, but the little white-haired dogs trotted unconcernedly along, unwitting that they were destined to be clubbed to death and roasted for the weekly feast.

“Surely, those peaceful-looking people were never really head-hunters,” said Anne, breaking a long silence.

“Five years ago no native’s life—far less a white man’s—was worth more up here than his skill with a weapon at any particular moment. Now, we don’t even carry a pistol.”

“It seems impossible.”

“Yes, doesn’t it?” He pointed to a fern-crowned hillock a few rods down the slope. “You see that rock—the one with the tree-ferns about it? I once found a body there—a body without a head.”

“Horrible!” She shuddered, and averted her eyes from the rock as if she fancied that a hideous shape still lay half concealed by the pitying ferns. “It makes things seem so near. How did you change them? I suppose you had to be severe, didn’t you? Yet they only acted according to their lights.”

“We had to come down hard at first, yet not so hard as you might think. Of course, these mountains were a blood-stained waste before we took hold. Absolute justice, and a firm hand, mixed with plenty of common-sense—that’s the truest kindness after all. There hasn’t been a murder in the Mountain Province for over a year—and the wild tribes are now contented farmers month in and month out where before they used to be prowling beasts at least half the time.”

“It seems magical. A woman usually doesn’t realize that force and violence are everywhere, even in civilization. Perhaps the very men we know are protecting us from terrible things in one way or another, all the time. Well, I’m grateful.”

Absorbed in themselves, they had allowed the others

to push past them at a widening of the trail, and now saw them far above, winding about a horseshoe curve. Captain Easton's voice floated down to them through the thin air.

"Stragglers, ahoy! We'll camp above. Bird-Flight Springs!"

His hand, flung up in mock farewell, showed distinct against the blue sky, while his body was hidden by intervening rocks—a startling effect of detachment.

"What do you say to taking this old trail to the left here?" suggested Crittenden. "There's a place about a mile along it where we can get a splendid view —no trees in the way."

She assented, and turning from the main trail, they followed a scarcely discernible track, so steep as to be dangerous for any but a mountain-bred pony.

On one side, the swelling slopes of Santo Tomás went up a thousand feet above their heads, its ravines heavy with forests, its peaks luminous with the sun or pearly-white where clouds had found an anchorage before the monsoon. In winter, frost whitened those heights, and ice coated the surface of the pools.

On the other side, the mountain fell away so abruptly that, looking far down, the valley seemed only a purple abyss wherein the Bued River was utterly invisible, although the echoes of its roar, flung upward by the fluted mountain-wall, proved that somewhere the gorge had a bottom.

Along the faint trail, between sheer wall and precipitous abyss, the ponies plodded, not too nonchalantly.

The riders drew rein in the bed of a water-course,

now nearly dry. The torrent that had once poured out of the cleft in the cliff at their right had cut for itself a small plateau before plunging into the depths below. Now, only a gray line of boulders wet by a thin trickle of water marked the one-time fury of its course.

Anne took the binoculars Crittenden held out to her, but without making use of them, stood gazing out over the valley—at the purple gorge, and the opposite slope where by ascending strata, thickgrowing bamboo yielded to maluco and ylang-ylang, these to pines, and pines to oaks—a sliding scale of seasons, each in perpetual bloom. Faintly seen, the yellow of the Benguet Road zigzagged its dizzy way from bottom to top of the slope. The chauffeur who should make a false turn of the wheel, the horseman who, meeting the great car, should hesitate an instant, would have no span of life left even for prayer.

She faced about, and a sigh of wonder and delight escaped her. From half a dozen leagues, through a green-lined gap in the farther mountain-wall, the great blue eye of the sea was looking in upon her.

“Lovely!” she said softly.

Her glance, going back to the Benguet Road, fell on the figures of two riders who came into view as they followed the road about the face of a lofty rock. Remembering the field-glass dangling at her wrist by its strap, she put it to her eyes in idle curiosity.

The far slope leaped toward her—the road winding past rock and pine, spanning a ravine on a spidery bridge, skirting precipices where the river boiled below, creeping doggedly upward to the rock where the two horsemen— No, one was a woman.

Anne's sweeping survey came to a halt upon the

riders. She saw their horses, their hands at the bridles, their shoulders, and—she barely repressed a cry! Rimmed by the glass, like faces in a conjuror's crystal, the faces of her husband and Julie Smythberg seemed pressed against her own!

She had left Dick at home, half prostrated by fever. Now he rode, miles away from that shaded veranda,—in company with the very woman who had caused her so much unhappiness. What did it mean?

Her lip curled as she answered her own question. His headache had been merely an excuse to give himself opportunity for a prolonged tête-à-tête with Julie Smythberg. He could spend hours at her side and yet be at home by the time Anne should return.

Darker thoughts began to stir in her mind. Had he not planned this thing from the morning of the day before, when he had realized that the trip to Santo Tomás would be a long one, and was not likely to be prevented by a broken trail! There had been something covert as well as abrupt in his manner.

But why should he resort to a trick in order to win an interview but little more intimate than he would have had if he and Julie had joined the riding-party? Was there not more than his usual love of evasion in this? Was it possible that there was a subtler design in their seeking out the Benguet Road for a ride? It was not a place where one either rode or walked for pleasure. Except the cat-footed Igorotes, only the great automobiles that connected with the railroad at the foot of the mountain range moved along that road.

She bit her lip in determined scorn of her wild thoughts—perhaps, a little in sheer pity for the wasted loyalty which bound her by its higher law.

XLI

THE FLOOD

DRAGON-FLIES, in coats of brown, brushed her face. The wind rustled the pine leaves with a sound hardly fainter than the murmur of the brook about her pony's feet. The great eye of the sea, sparkling in the wester-
ing sun, cast its liquid glance through the gap in the mountains. From the sea to the cliff behind her, a sky, tender and delicately blue, arched the world. The sky seemed all at once to have settled close about her head.

Slowly, almost covertly, she turned toward Crit-
tenden, fearful lest, notwithstanding the distance, his trained eye might have shared in the discovery she had made. But he was looking neither at her nor at the view. His head inclined downward and to the right, he seemed at once to be watching the water rippling about the ponies' fetlocks, and listening to the increasing echoes that came from beyond the point where the bed of the stream wound into view from its narrow cañon in the cliff.

"What is it?" she asked, her eyes following his. "Something in the water? Not a snake!" Held by his intentness, she stared down. "Why! See how fast the water's rising!"

He raised his head. "You notice it, then? I was wondering if I was letting my imagination run away with me."

"Yes. It's like a miniature tide. But a tide in these mountains isn't possible. How——"

“Listen!” The peremptory command startled her into silence.

She was conscious that the echoes beyond the point had become a hoarse murmur, a murmur whose steady crescendo was approaching a clamour.

“It’s only the wind in the trees, isn’t it?—or in the rock crannies?” She was strangely uneasy nevertheless.

“It may be,” he said. “But what about the water rising? It still is, you see.”

He glanced down, but up again at once, for the murmur in the cañon had suddenly leaped to a roar, reverberant, sullen, menacing.

“Curious!” he mused. “I never heard wind blow like that before. If we were in the West now I should think there was a stampede of cattle heading our way, and pretty close, too. Yes, a stampede or else a——”

He broke off abruptly. While she stared in amazement, he wheeled his pony sharply beside hers, and caught her bridle-rein.

“We’d better get out of this—back on the higher ground there.” Under his fierce hand and spurred heels, the ponies broke into a water-clogged trot. “It’s probably nothing. But the rains back in the mountains—these narrow cañons——”

Her low scream snatched the words from his mouth. “Look! Oh! Look!”

He caught his breath! About the point of rock a brown wall of water rushed into view, roaring as it came like some enormous beast. Its front massed with trees and earth and stones, rearing a crest full ten feet high, and shouldering aside the walls of the cleft

on either side, the flood burst from its mountain lair upon them.

To Anne Nelson came at that moment only the thought that she was looking on the very face of death—and that she saw it from within the circling arm of the man whom she would have chosen out of all the world.

The roaring water rushed upon them. Yet she was aware of his body thrust between her and hideous death, of a heart-breaking scramble, of a madman fighting with maddened ponies and maddened water. The water swirled about her. She closed her eyes.

Then she felt herself lifted gently from her saddle, and heard his voice deep at her ear, deep, and choking with heavy breaths.

“All right—now! Are you—hurt?”

Leaning motionless against him, she opened her eyes. They stood on the slope of the path—the brown water went rushing past not three feet below them. The wild crest of it had already dashed itself to ruin in the abyss. The ponies, their bridle-reins over Crittenden’s arm, started and shivered with fear as a rock or mass of earth fell from the undercut cañon-wall into the furious stream.

Save for the diminishing roar of the water, and the occasional rattle of stones, the world seemed wrapped in eternal silence. The sun had already gone down behind the farther mountain-wall. Ribbons of the after-glow were flung across the sky, scarlet and rose and orange above, purest green below. The hush of approaching night held the gorge.

Slowly she became conscious that her head rested against his wet shoulder. Trembling from head to

foot, she raised her hand and pressed it against his cheek.

"O—oh!" She caught her breath to still her shaking voice. "You! You're soaked!"

"So are you—child!"

There was that in the depths of his tone that gripped her heart. She raised her head. His eyes were luminous in his white face.

"Anne—my dear——"

She nodded pitifully, and he knew that she understood all that was in his heart. Her hand stole into his.

"Alan!"

Their eyes met, full of the sorrow of the love that death would let them hide no longer.

"Oh, my dear!" he said huskily. And she could find no more to say than he: "My dear! Oh, my dear!" They kissed each other.

Then she found herself leaning against her pony, one hand twisted desperately in his mane.

"Anne!" The resolved steadiness of Crittenden's voice was more compelling than if it had been vibrant with the passion that possessed him. "Anne!"

His hand, which had gripped the pommel of his saddle, was now turned palm upward, quivering. She watched it, fascinated.

"That first day—do you remember—on the Luneta? I couldn't help staring at you. It seemed to me I knew you—that I'd always known you. And you looked back at me as if you felt there was something between us—felt you'd seen me before. It has been ever since that first day with me—and—" He leaned toward

her almost menacingly, as one who dares another to deny a truth.

She felt her heart beating so suffocatingly in her throat that she must open her lips or die.

“And—with me.” Her whisper was an anguish of confession. “Oh! I’ve fought and fought against it, but——”

His eyes shone. “I know—I know. But it’s been a power beyond us—above us. I found you long ago, but—you belonged to *him!* And yet I love you.”

She lifted a despairing, stricken face to his. The misery there—the love and tenderness—stirred him to the depths.

He flung out his hands. “Then, dear—you—you and I——”

Her eyes closed, and she swayed a little—not with weakness, but with the effort to resist what she longed with all her being to yield to.

“Alan!” She caught her breath. “Wait! It’s all madness. No, no! Don’t speak. It’s sweet—to hear you, but—it’s all madness!”

She held him silent by an imploring gesture while she struggled to control herself. When she spoke again it was with some measure of self-possession.

“Don’t you see? I must be loyal— Oh, I *must*. You yourself—when you’ve had time to think—you’ll see it, too.”

He uttered one word. “Loyal!”

“Ah, I know what you mean. I know all you mean. Don’t think I don’t understand how forbearing you are. You might say there’s very little left to be loyal to.” Her eyes were misty with unshed tears. “But it’s you who’ve taught me—taught me what loyalty

means—you more than anyone else in the world. Don't you see? If I—went with you, I'd be harming you—more than myself or him, you most of all."

The eager light died slowly from his face. He gazed at her in silent worship. Her answering smile was pitiful yet full of thankfulness.

"Oh, my dear," she said. "Help me! I know I'm right. We'll love each other—always—always. But we'll be loyal."

His face was very bleak. His eyes held hers as if in a long farewell.

"You angel," he said reverently.

She hardly kept back her tears that her double victory—over him and over herself—had been won. Yet she would not have had it otherwise.

There was a long silence between them. When he spoke, his words, carefully matter-of-fact and casual, seemed to be of another world.

"Your saddle blanket slipped a little in the scramble, I'd better straighten it before we ride on."

When he looked up from adjusting it, the bleak look had gone from his face—his eyes met hers almost calmly. "Well, I fancy they'll be waiting supper for us," he said with a quiet smile.

As she swung into the saddle, her cheek pressed an instant against his head.

"Oh! but you're—a comfort," she said.

XLII

INTO THE ABYSS

THE two figures that Anne had seen riding the Zigzag of the Benguet Road were, in fact, those of Julie Smythberg and Dick Nelson.

They moved down the shadowed cañon, their horses close together. They rode absorbed in talk, yet Dick, with half unconscious care of his companion, kept to the outside of the air-hung way. Now and then, too, he laid a restraining hand on the bridle of her rather skittish horse, a restraint not wholly unnecessary.

“I wish you hadn’t come on that Australian to-day,” he said, after a gambol more lively than usual. “He’s a little too full of ginger. He may tire your wrist, and a tired wrist on this road——”

“Oh, I’m quite all right,” she returned lightly. “I’ve been in worse places than this with him. Besides, it was you who were so set on coming down here, wasn’t it?”

His gaze glowed on her lips, thin yet provocative in shape and colour; on the full lines of her bust; on her narrowed, subtly-challenging eyes. Her lashes drooped as he gazed. With a faint uplifting of her eyebrows, as if protesting against a feeling she could not resist, she let her body sway toward him until her shoulder was warm against his. He slipped an eager arm about her.

“I wanted to get you off here because it’s almost the only place we can come without meeting a lot of other people. Everywhere else there’s always some-

body walking or riding about. There'll be nobody to bother us here to-day because the automobile line's not running."

"I wondered why we dared ride down here."

"That's it. I heard yesterday that the cars wouldn't run to-day—there's a wash-out of the road a few miles above Camp One." His arm tightened about her. "You see, Julie, I wanted to see you alone again—alone."

Her body shook a little under his hot touch, and her eyebrows arched again, but she smiled at him as he went on: "I haven't really seen you since you left Manila."

"I like that!"

"You know what I mean. I've only seen you when there were a thousand other people about, or in sight, at least."

"One must respect the *convenances*, mustn't one? It's bad enough to have every passer-by see us playing tennis at Camp John Hay or resting on the bench, hours at a time—or together at the Country Club every day."

"You never let me come to your house!"

"I should hope not!—with Paul in Manila still? That would be silly! No—one really must respect the *convenances*." She drew away from him at the word.

He released her reluctantly. "I suppose so. Yes, I suppose we've got to do that. But in Manila, Julie, you were—kinder."

"Manila is a biggish town. What one does there isn't noticed. But in Baguio? Hum-m! You know everyone lives on a hilltop in Baguio, Dick."

"Of course," he said eagerly. "That's why I've

brought you off here—to have you to myself for a while."

She gave a nod of appreciation. "That's nice of you. It's very jolly to be here—with you. You know I'm more than a bit fond of you, Dick."

"I hope so." His short laugh sounded grim to her ears. "If you aren't—if you haven't been fond of me—" He checked his only half-formed thought.

Her teeth pressed her lower lip before she spoke. "Go on, if you like. If I haven't been fond of you all along, then I'm—a brute. Isn't that it?"

"I mean—"

"You're quite right. I would be a brute really if"—a sudden fire burned at the back of her expressionless eyes—"if I weren't more than a bit fond of you."

He kicked a foot free, and swung it as if his stirrup irked him. "Well, I've been afraid sometimes—Look here! do you remember we had a talk once about that offer a Hamburg firm made me—about taking over my business from Smythberg and Company? Do you remember that? I'm afraid I was pretty 'raw' that day. I've been sorry."

Again her teeth gripped her lower lip. "I don't remember thinking so. That had nothing to do with my—my being fond of you. I only remember that talk because it was on the same day you gave me that pearl card-case. That made me think for the first time you might be—serious."

Her words seemed to satisfy him, for his face lightened, and his foot found his stirrup again. "Happy day, then!" He glanced about. "And so is this a happy day—since I've got you alone—here."

His extended arm embraced the blue sky, the cloud towering above the rim of the gorge, the wooded slope of the opposite mountain. The last brought a distasteful recollection to his mind. He lowered his arm abruptly and rode, frowning toward the frowning forests.

Julie understood well enough the reason for his gloomy abstraction, but remained as silent as he. There was between them a tacit understanding, perhaps born only of caution, but partaking of almost dignity, that Anne's name should not be mentioned by either. This restraint enabled Dick to forget for hours together, and with him to forget was to deprive of existence.

Perhaps Julie never lost sight of the fact that another had a legal right, at least, to claim the love of the man who rode beside her. But if the thought disturbed her, she never betrayed herself by questions or even by those indirect references, cruel as rapiers, that some women know so well how to make. Julie Smythberg seldom talked when it was better to keep silent. So now, she rode by Dick's side without speaking, until he roused himself, and turned toward her smiling.

“The day—here—is like you, Julie—charming, yet mysterious.”

“Mysterious? In what way?”

“I hardly know, but I feel it.”

“Do you feel I'm mysterious, really? I'm not sure that's a compliment.”

“Yes, of course it is. You're as mysterious as—as Lilith.”

"Lilith? Oh—if you go back to the time of Adam, I suppose I can't object, can I?"

"Why should you? Lilith stands for the loveliest creature in the Garden of Eden. She stands for love before love was chained by Law! This is our Eden—I wish it were a desert island."

"A desert island! Horrors, Dick! You'd hate me inside of a fortnight—on a desert island."

"Never!"

"Oh, I'm sure you would. I know you better than you know yourself. I do, really."

Her own words served to raise a more serious thought. She gave him a sidelong glance, her long eyes alert. "I've been wondering, Dick—about things. I've been wondering how long this can last."

"This? Last?" he repeated.

"How long can we go on like this—you and I? There's bound to be an awful smash some day, you know. It's sure to come—positively. This sort of thing always does go smash in the end, doesn't it?"

"Let it smash!" he said almost roughly. "I'd take you to Paris to-morrow, if you'd let me—in the face of all the world. You know that."

She pondered, as if considering the matter for the first time. Then she shook her head. "No. It mustn't come to—Paris, if it can be helped. We've been wonderfully lucky so far. I believe people have hardly begun to talk about us—really, and people are usually so quick about this sort of thing, you know. Of course, as long as Paul doesn't bother about us—"

"Just so. If he doesn't, it's no one else's 'affair.'"

She shook her head again, superior knowledge in her gesture. "That's nonsense, you know. It's always someone else's affair—it's everyone's affair. It's the world's affair—its duty to smash us—if it has to notice us at all. Yes, even although Paul—" She avoided putting the conclusion into words.

"I suppose so," he assented. "And yet Paris—"

"No—not Paris, Dick," she said with finality.

Often when he stopped to think of the hidden meanings of her words—when he tried to read the riddle of the Sphinx that looked forth from her eyes—he had a haunting suspicion that, in the very bottom of her heart, she remained indifferent to him. She had given him well-nigh all that a woman can give, and yet, if he did not possess her soul, his joy of her must be incomplete indeed.

"Why are you worrying about a crash?" he asked abruptly. "To-day, I mean, more than any other day?"

"Because I feel that every day that goes by makes the end one day nearer. That's all. There's bound to be something to catch us up, sooner or later, isn't there?" She hesitated, then went on deliberately: "I've been wondering if it wouldn't be better to end it ourselves—while we can."

Gripping her bridle-rein, he checked her horse so sharply that the animal reared dangerously. He was compelled to give a moment to quiet him.

"End it ourselves! What do you mean?" he demanded at last.

She understood the accusation in his eyes and

voice, but whether from courage or indifference, she did not flinch. Her hand rested on his shoulder.

"I know what you're thinking," she said. "But I care for you as much as ever. Yes, more than I did at first. That's the truth, Dick. But I've been trying to make you see what I mean. I don't think I'm a coward—I've shown you I'm not, haven't I?—but I am afraid to face a downright smash. I don't want to make a mess of my whole life—even for you."

"You've been risking that all along."

"I know I have, but I've been getting more and more afraid until—" She looked at him, then launched an argument long held in reserve. "Dick, at the bottom of your heart, you don't want me to make a mess of things for you. You wouldn't thank me for it—not in the long run."

He started violently. "What!"

"No, no," she said coolly. "It's true. You may as well admit it to yourself. *I* realized it long ago."

"What? For Heaven's sake! What?"

She nodded firmly and a little sadly. "You're a good sort, Dick—a good enough sort for me! All of that. But you can't stick to any one thing long."

The clear olive of his cheeks was darkly flushed. "I never cared for a woman in my life as I do for you, Julie!"

"It's not only that." Her hand went from his shoulder, and was pressed an instant on his hair. "It isn't only a woman, Dick. You can't stick to anything long—a woman or work or play, or an ambition—if you ever had one."

The flush in his cheeks extended to his forehead and

his throat. "I've had ambition enough, by God! There was a time, not very long ago, when I tried to be a prince—a dictator. You needn't stare—it's true. The dictator of these Islands—with Japan to back me! I dreamed of being that—and with you beside me."

For a moment she looked at him, a new light in her eyes—the light of dawning respect. Then she shook her head sadly.

"But it was only a dream, Dick."

"That wasn't my fault," he said with bitterness. "Things were too strong for me. I had to give it up."

"I don't say things are your fault. It's your—your nature. You're made that way. It's a pity You're fond of me, I know that; I'm fond of you. But, Dick, I'm brave enough to admit I'm not fond enough to spoil my life for you. You know that a month, or a year, in Paris with me wouldn't mean the end of things for you—you're a man!—but it would for me. For you wouldn't—you couldn't—care for me always, Dick."

"I could—I would!" he returned almost sullenly. "You don't understand me, Julie. You don't believe me!"

"I believe you believe yourself," she said.

He started again, stared at her, and then sat frowning, now at her, now across the abyss, now down at his horse's ears. For perhaps the first time in his life, he had heard in plain if kindly words another's opinion of himself. It was a thing peculiarly painful to one who had always shut his eyes to fact when fact was distasteful to him.

It took him a long time to lay hold again of some measure of self-content. Gradually, however, his frown smoothed a little, and the flush began to die from his cheeks. A faint smile woke in Julie's watching eyes, a smile half whimsical, half pitying.

“Dick?”

“Well?”

“I've been talking about putting an end to things, between you and me, but——”

At her hesitating word, the light of hope instantly began to brighten his face. “Well?” he urged.

“I didn't mean to end things to-day, necessarily—not if it will spoil your day, Dick.”

He drew a long breath of relief. “Good! You've only been playing with me—to see what I'd say——”

“No, no. I'm in earnest. But I was talking about the future—not the immediate future either, if you like.”

The lingering cloud passed swiftly from his face and from his spirit. “If I like? I do like—with all my heart. We'll leave it to the very distant future—when we're old and toothless and weary of life!” His voice rang merrily between the steep cañon walls; all his gaiety had returned. “You frightened me, Julie, you witch! The future? To the devil with the future!”

“If you like.”

“Good! For the present, you and I are riding together—with hours before us—hours to ourselves.”

She fell silent at this. They continued to ride slowly down the narrow and winding road. Here and there, as they passed, a clod of earth or a stone, loosened by the recent rains, slipped from the edge of

the path into the abyss. The way wound about the brow of a cliff in so sharp a curve that, looking straight before them, it seemed to end in sheer space.

The first hint of dusk had begun to darken the narrowing walls of the gorge, yet they continued to ride on. Now and then Julie's slow smile met Dick's quick one. Now and then, when his glance strayed from her, her long eyes studied him sidelong.

Into their calm broke suddenly—appallingly to those two who understood its meaning!—the loud clamour of a motor-horn, sounding a dread warning about the face of the curving cliff. Dick had been misinformed about the break in the road. Even as the two drew rein, even as they exchanged startled looks, a great passenger automobile, taking the sharp grade and sharper curve at a speed to ensure the steering-gear control, rushed into view. Many faces, faces suddenly grown set and white, stared down at Julie and Dick. All that followed was over in a breath.

It was true that everyone acted with the utmost coolness. The chauffeur, mindful of the twenty lives in the hollow of his hand, swung his car to the inner side of the road. Julie and Dick reined their horses toward the outer edge. The space left for them was giddily narrow, but it would have sufficed—there was actually room to pass.

The danger was almost over when Julie's skittish Australian horse took fright. He made one wild bound, then, facing the great car, began to back. With whip and booted toe and sawing hands, Julie fought him forward—in vain.

Whatever else Dick Nelson may have been, he was a brave man. Those staring from the car, saw his face

harden and his teeth set. Driving in his spurs, he burst in between Julie's crazed animal and the imminent brink. In a breath he had ridden off the horse—and her—to safety.

But his gallant act had brought him to the crumbling edge of the precipice. The apparition of Julie's little booted foot at a level with his eyes—her single shattering scream—may have told him that he was falling into the abyss.

XLIII

THE MARCH FORWARD

WHEN Anne and Crittenden dismounted in the circle of the campfire at Bird-Flight Springs, night had come, and supper was almost ready.

Hot water for coffee was boiling in a kettle which swung from a tripod of green bamboos. John Holbrook was holding a long-handled frying pan while Helen stirred the scrambled eggs. Mary Travis and "Tom" Brown were trying to broil rashers of bacon to a proper crispness. On a canvas table, the others were laying out salad, sandwiches, cold chicken, olives, oranges, and bottled mineral waters. Through the haze of emotions that still swayed her, these simple and homely preparations seemed to Anne as unreal as things of another world.

Brown allowed his attention to wander a moment from the bacon and Miss Travis. "Hello! You two look damp. Did you strike a shower down below?"

"Something like a cloud-burst struck *us*, would be nearer the fact," returned Crittenden easily. "But if you'll let us get at that fire, we'll dry out in short order."

Easton had glanced up at Brown's remark. His keen eyes grew grave as he looked from Anne to Crittenden, but the latter's significant shake of the head cautioned him to keep silent.

The grassy plateau of Bird-Flight Springs made a tiny porch in the gigantic structure of the mountain, a porch roofed by straight-spreading boughs of pines,

and walled by rocks of fantastic shapes. From the springs behind foamed the white and silver of a little cataract, now yellowed by the moonlight, now reddened by the light of the fire. The wind rustled the grass in a tender monotone.

Anne and Crittenden mingled in the gaiety of the others. If she was more quiet than usual, and his voice less often heard, the fact passed unnoticed in the general merriment.

Captain Easton whistled mess-call, and the picnickers fell to upon their supper.

“Alan,” mumbled Easton over a chicken-wing, “didn’t I hear—Constabulary Headquarters—you might go to China on special duty—soon?”

“Yes. I may go.”

“When?”

“If I go, it will be within a few days, I think.”

Helen March, sitting close to Anne, heard her catch a quick breath, and felt a long shudder sway her body.

Where an extremity of the plateau ran into the mountainside like a tongue, dim shapes of Igorotes were visible about a fire. Supper finished, the picnickers strolled over to make acquaintance, but found the hillmen too much absorbed in the important matter they had in hand to do more than smile at their visitors.

Their fire had been kindled on the leeward side of a slanting rock, and had burned itself to a bed of glowing embers. A man crouched behind a great, flat basket propped on edge for a shield from the heat. With one end of a green bamboo supported in a hole

in the rock, the other against his leathern chest, he slowly twirled the body of a dog upon this eight-foot spit. The juices of the animal, dripping on the embers, sent up a savoury smell to make the expectant Igorotes smack their lips.

A little in the background squatted the women, not uncomely, hugging their black-and-gray blankets about them against the nip of the mountain air.

Their submissive, crouching figures, the gleaming black eyes of their lords—each man with a great knife at his belt—the night, and the lonely mountain, the body of the dog roasting over the blood-red coals, made a strange and gruesome sight to Western eyes. Anne drew closer to Crittenden, as if for protection. He glanced down at her, and each saw in the other's eyes the same thought—a little while before they had clasped each other while Death plucked them by the feet.

It would have been easy to die together then. It was bitter to know that they must live apart! It was bitter-sweet to her to think that it might have been impossible to lead him back from the madness that had carried them both away after that terrible moment when the water had burst upon them. If he too had seen the riders on the Benguet Road!

The chief of the hillmen saluted Crittenden, and spoke a tentative word or two in a dialect full of metallic sounds. He answered in the same tongue. The Igorote began to talk volubly. Warming to the sound of his own voice, he stood erect, and spoke at length, with easy, sweeping gestures. Crittenden listened attentively, now and then putting a question.

"What did the old chap have to say?" asked Brown, when the Igorote had finished.

"The gist of it was that one of his men—that slim boy there—has just come by a short cross-cut over from the Benguet Road. He says the boy saw a car pass carrying a dead man. That sort of thing is always peculiarly interesting to these people, you know."

"A white man?"

"He doesn't seem to be sure. He says the body was stretched out on one of the seats. If it was, I suppose one of the American foremen has died at one of the construction camps, and they were bringing his body up to Baguio for burial."

The story conveyed no hint of personal catastrophe to any one of his hearers, but there was a murmur or two of regret for the death of a fellow-being.

Leaving the Igorotes to the delights of their dog-feast, the Americans returned to their own campfire, and lingered long about it. Crittenden ensconced himself near Anne, but hardly any words passed between them.

The night was of the sort that often favours Benguet, so clear that the sky appeared to be only a darker shade of blue than in the day. The stars were shining on a level with the heights. The moon hung above the valley like a lantern, friendly, near at hand, homely.

Under the influence of the moon and the swaying shadows, John Holbrook began to repeat to Helen a verse of his own. His voice was low, but the words reached to the others:

"Half the by-ways of Benguet
Plead with me to turn again!
Still I see your eyes shine wet
From the ferns in every glen;
Still the pines beside the trail
Sigh, as you sighed, long ago,
When I left you, sweetly pale,
Far in pine-bowered—"

His voice trailed away to silence. Nothing was heard save the sighing of the wind through the pine-boughs and the murmur of the little cataract behind them.

At last Captain Easton glanced at the watch on his wrist. "Well," he said regretfully, "it's time for 'boots and saddles.' We'll need this moonlight to help us home, you know."

All the way down the mountain, and through the town, Anne rode in a dream—a dream whose visions now made her eyes misty with tears, and twitched her mouth pitifully; now made her lift her head in defiant joy, and set her heart beating to the sound of passionate words. The merciful night hid joy and sorrow alike.

The party had gained a point not far from the Country Club, when she was aroused from her dreams. Captain Easton, riding in the van, had reined in his pony to peer down at someone who stood panting in the road.

"Hello! What's up?" he demanded. "Do you want to be run over! Why! Is that *you*, Tomboy, Girl? At this time of night! What in the world, girlie?"

"Daddy! Daddy!" cried a clear little voice, horrified yet eager—

There was a clamour of other voices—a cry from

Helen—a stern command from Captain Easton for Tomboy to be silent. But it was too late—Anne had caught the gasped-out words.

“Oh, daddy! Mrs. Nelson’s husband’s been killed! His horse slipped, and the big automobile knocked him right off the road—ever so far down!”

She was conscious of neither pain nor horror—only that the moon and stars had begun to move in one vast wheel—faster—faster—faster!

Then Crittenden was beside her. His voice thrilled her back to life.

“Put your hand on my shoulder! That’s right. Steady!”

The others closed about her. But she had no need of them—her hand was on his shoulder. He began to lead her slowly forward.

THE END

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